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ABSTRACT

This report is the result of a 2-year effort to solicit, produce, and analyze feedback from over 1,500 adults across the United States about what National Education Goal 6--the literacy and lifelong learning goal--meant to them. Part I is a synthesis of adult learner perspectives on Goal 6. It first describes the four purposes that drive adults' quest for skill and knowledge: literacy for access and orientation, literacy as voice, literacy as independent action, and literacy as a bridge to the future. It then describes how adults see their roles and responsibilities as workers, parents, and citizens. Finally, it links the pieces together, making clear why all four purposes must be addressed in every context in which adults are taught if they are to fulfill their rights and responsibilities as citizens and be prepared to compete in a global economy. Part II contains samples of the actual essays submitted by adult learners. They are divided into these sections: what it means to be literate, what it means to compete in a global economy, what it means to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, voices of adults on welfare, and voices of adults in prison and treatment centers. Appendixes include an overview of project process and methodology, an open letter, guidelines, and a list of participating programs. (YLB)

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ED 384 792

Equipped for the Future:

A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

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National Institute for Literacy
July 1995

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Competition in the global community can run you over if you do not get the information required for today.

Kelly Brown
Black Hawk College
Moline, Illinois

Times are hard and getting harder; education is the way to go, the road to go down. Without it you would be nowhere, your road will be long but not leading anywhere.

Lucille Gallaher
CEFS Vandalia Adult Literacy Lab
Effingham, Illinois

Without an education in the year 2000 we the people will be in serious trouble. Because now everything is moving forward fast and without an education you will be moving nowhere.

Brenda Harris
Jackson Program for Adult Readers
Jackson, Mississippi

Equipped for the Future:

A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

by
Sondra Gayle Stein

National Institute for Literacy
July 1995

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

America's highest aspirations for the education of all our people are reflected in our National Education Goals. One of NIFL's major charges is to measure and track the progress of the nation in meeting National Education Goal 6—the literacy and lifelong learning goal. Goal 6 states that:

> *By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."*

Two years ago, the NIFL and the National Education Goals Panel began a joint effort to make Goal 6 a real guide for the literacy field—a guide that defines in functional ways what it means to be literate, to be able to get a job and raise a family, and to be a productive citizen. We decided that the best way to start was to ask adult learners what Goal 6 meant to them. This report is the result of two years of hard, collaborative work—on the part of teachers, administrators, research and program staff, writers, and, especially, adult learners—to solicit, produce, and analyze feedback from over 1,500 adults across the country about what literacy means to them.

We think the words of these adult learners provide a compelling vision of what the goals and results should be for a world-class system of adult education and literacy in America. What do adults come to our programs to learn and be able to do? What kinds of programs, staff, and resources are necessary to enable adult learners to reach their goals? Over the next several years, the NIFL will engage the literacy field in a planning and development process to answer these questions and to build a literacy system for the 21st century. We urge you to be part of that process.

This report contains both a synthesis of adult learner perspectives on Goal 6 and examples of the actual essays submitted. We believe you will find both parts informative, thought- provoking, and useful. Please use the form at the back of this publication to let us know your thoughts on what adult learners told us, so that we can continue and broaden the national dialogue on reforming our system of adult education and literacy.

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Hartman

Andrew Hartman
Director

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Acknowledgements

Over the past two years many individuals and groups have worked in support of the National Institute for Literacy's Project on Goal 6 of the National Education Goals.

More than one hundred and fifty adult literacy tutors and teachers across the country joined us in our efforts to bring adult learners into the policy process. Many not only devoted several class sessions to preparing and writing for this project, but also spent hours transcribing tapes of classroom discussions so we could get the full flavor of the rich and animated exchange of ideas that precipitated these thoughtful and enlightening writings.

More than 1500 adult students took our request seriously, spending considerable time and painstaking effort to make sure we knew what they think is important to know and to do. The gratitude expressed by so many learners at being asked their opinion brought home to us the importance of a project like this. Again and again their words reminded us why we needed to ask.

Once the responses started pouring in, we realized we were in the midst of a major research project. Luckily, we had expert assistance in shaping and carrying out this part of the project. Hanna Fingeret and Jereann King from Literacy South got us off to a good start by designing Guidelines that ensured we would receive sharply focused, easy to use data. Ray Rist, Director of the Center for Policy Studies, Graduate School of Education and Human Development at The George Washington University, orchestrated the data analysis operation, overseeing the work of the coder/analysts, and consistently communicating his excitement about the research enterprise.

Among our coders, Sara Goodwin, Kirti Shastri and Louise Weiner all maintained a strong commitment throughout to letting the voices speak for themselves. Carole Inge shared this commitment. She also quickly distinguished herself as the coordinator of data management and has stayed on as a Fellow at the Institute to continue to work with me in coordinating the many complex pieces of this project.

The magic of any project that relies on primary source material is that, as you immerse yourself in the data, you begin to see things differently than you ever did before. The task then is to reflect these different views in writing. As we began to sketch out our findings in early drafts of this report, we received valuable feedback from many. Gregg Jackson and Hanna Fingeret both maintained a commitment to the project once their official roles were ended and generously served as my best and most consistent critics through many drafts. Nickie Askov, Susan Green, Andy Hartman, Joe Klaits, Lisa Levinson, Juliet Merrifield, Peggy McGuire, and Mary Jane Schmitt all read early drafts of the manuscript and gave feedback and encouragement to the effort. Joan Wills helped me think through how our findings could best be connected with the work going forward on skills standards. Cindy Prince, my colleague at the Goals Panel, provided unflagging support, mirroring my excitement at our findings.

Everyday support is critical when a project becomes part of your work life for as long as this one did—and the team at the Institute was always there through every crisis along the way. Andy Hartman was encouraging, persistent and demanding—exactly what you would want from your Director. Special thanks, also, to Carolyn, Jaleh, Meg, Sharyn, Susan and, of course, Alan, who will all say they were only doing their jobs, but who gave just what I needed just when I needed it.

It is my hope that this report will communicate to you what we heard from adults across the nation. Luckily, my words do not need to stand alone. Part Two of this publication includes a sample of adult writings. So you can hear the voices for yourselves.

Sondra Stein
Goal 6 Project Director
National Institute for Literacy
June 1995

Part I

Equipped for the Future:

A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Executive Summary

> The people of the United States need to know that individuals in our society who do not possess the levels of skill, literacy, and training essential to this new era will be effectively disenfranchised, not simply from the material rewards that accompany competent performance, but also from the chance to participate fully in our national life. A high level of shared education is essential to a free, democratic society and to the fostering of a common culture, especially in a country that prides itself on pluralism and individual freedom.
>
> — *A Nation at Risk*, 1981

In 1989 the President of the United States called together the 50 governors to consider the state of American education. He labeled the gathering a *Summit*, calling attention to the ways in which the condition of education in our country did, in fact, make us a "nation at risk," and making clear that this crisis could only be addressed through concerted action by those present at both the state and the national level.

The Summit launched a new approach to educational improvement. Instead of focusing on what was wrong with the schools, the new strategy focused on what results we wanted to achieve in each of the states and across the nation. Six National Education Goals were defined, and the National Education Goals Panel was established to identify clear benchmarks and indicators that would enable us to track national and state progress toward each of these goals.[1]

Most of the Goals focus on improving the quality of education for children and young people. Only one looks ahead and focuses on what is a primary aim of all eight goals: an adult population with the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure the continuing leadership of the United States in a changing world. This goal states:

> By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

While there is broad consensus that too few adults in our present society can meet the requirements of this Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal, there is no consensus on what those requirements are. The Goal has remained vague and ambiguous, no more than a rhetorical flourish in most people's minds. While it identifies the areas of public life—citizenship and the workplace—that adults must be prepared to function in, it gives little guidance as to what adults need to know and be able to do if they are to participate fully and successfully in these two spheres.

As a result, Goal 6 has had little practical impact on our definitions of progress for adults in local, state and national education and training programs,

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[1] When Congress passed the Goals 2000: Educate America Act in 1994 two more goals were added to the original list, and the Goals Panel was directed not only to track progress in the states and the nation but also to facilitate that progress by identifying educational practices that were making a difference.

or on what or how adults learn in these programs. Progress has been haphazard, dependent on the commitment of skilled teachers in exceptional programs rather than the systematic, concerted national effort the Governors and President envisioned when they set this Goal.

In 1993, motivated by a common mandate to measure progress toward Goal 6, the National Institute for Literacy and the National Education Goals Panel launched a joint project to arrive at a measurable definition of this goal. In addition to commissioning papers from researchers, policymakers and assessment experts, we decided to ask for advice from adult learners themselves. Our hope was that we might find in their words a starting point for a consensus-building process that would enable us to define and measure the Adult Literacy Goal more clearly.

In January, 1994 the Institute sent an "Open Letter" inviting adult learners in programs all across the country to join with us in our effort. Responses came from over 1500 adult students participating in 149 adult programs in 34 states and Puerto Rico. They reflected the full spectrum of adult students, in terms of age, race, culture and ethnicity, as well as the full spectrum of programs, including community-based organizations, community colleges, volunteer programs, and vocational and public schools. At the same time, however, these responses presented a remarkably consistent vision of what adults want literacy programs to prepare them to do.

Adults told us that in order to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship they need the skills and knowledge:

- to have access to information and orient themselves in the world;
- to give voice to their ideas and opinions and to have the confidence that their voice will be heard and taken into account;
- to solve problems and make decisions on their own, acting independently as a parent, citizen and worker, for the good of their families, their communities, and their nation.
- to be able to keep on learning in order to keep up with a rapidly changing world.

This vision focuses on *key purposes*—what adults need to do—in *key contexts*—the family, the community and the nation—and *key roles*—as parent, citizen, and worker. If we rephrased Goal Six to reflect these customer-defined outcomes, it might read something like this:

> By the Year 2000 every adult will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to orient themselves in a rapidly changing world, to voice their ideas and be heard, and to act independently as a parent, a citizen, and a worker, for the good of family, community, and nation.

Rephrasing the Goal—whatever words we choose—is the easy part. The harder part is figuring out what this vision means for how we deliver adult education and literacy services. Right now, the adult education and training system is fragmented by the competing eligibility and performance requirements of multiple state and federal funding sources. While there has been frustration at every level with the impact of this fragmentation on our ability to meet adult needs, we have not been able to forge a consensus on a goal or mission to unify this system.

The National Institute for Literacy believes that the vision shaped in these adult perspectives constitutes a customer-driven mandate for change. We propose this vision be adopted as a mission statement for our field and that we begin—as a field—to explore what we would need to do differently, as teachers, administrators, counselors, support staff, providers of technical assistance and staff development, funders and policymakers, to assure that every aspect of our delivery system is dedicated to achieving Goal 6 as defined by these adult students.

In publishing this research report we hope to stimulate broad discussion of what our customers want and what we need to do to meet their needs. We want to know what you think a customer-driven adult learning system might look like, and what steps you think we might take to begin to construct that system, classroom by classroom, program by program, state by state. As a first step we invite you to read the report carefully and let us know if the vision presented here reflects your experience with adult learners. If it does, we hope you will join us in:

- affirming the vision.
- helping us identify key areas in our system for change.
- beginning the process of change wherever you work.
- helping us evaluate how well we are doing in making these changes.
- identifying what seems to be working in different places, in terms of helping us better meet learner goals.
- helping us figure out what we need to do next if we are serious about enabling every adult to develop the knowledge and skills they need to achieve these purposes.

Equipped for the Future:

A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

"What skills and knowledge do adults need? They need to know the history of their country and where it's been and where it's going so they can use their skills to be part of the fast and changing world."

—Adult Learner, Lincoln, Nebraska

In January, 1994 the National Institute for Literacy sent an "Open Letter" inviting adult learners in programs all across the country to join with us and the National Education Goals Panel in our effort to define the Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal, one of six National Education Goals established in 1990 by the President and the 50 Governors. This Goal states:

> By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

We know that our country is some distance from this goal. In the words of Shirley Malcom, author of *Promises to Keep: Creating High Standards for American Students*, "too few adults in our present society can meet the requirements of participatory democracy and workplace literacy."[1] But since we have no consensus on what these requirements are, we cannot effectively quantify Malcom's "too few." Thanks to the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS),[2] for the first time we have an accurate profile of the literacy skills of the United States' adult population. The NALS, however, only tells us what adults know, *not* what they need to know. At the National Institute for Literacy and the Goals Panel we understood that without a consensus on what skills and knowledge adults actually need to be able to participate fully and successfully in civic and economic life we could not determine how far we are from Goal 6 or gauge our progress toward achieving it.[3]

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[1] Shirley Malcom, *Promises to Keep: Creating High Standards for American Students*, Report to the National Education Goals Panel, November 15, 1993, p. 2.

[2] Irwin Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, Lynn Jenkins, and Andrew Kolstad, *Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey*. Washington, D.C.: NCES, 1993.

[3] There has been, and continues to be, progress in developing a clearer picture of what adults need to know and be able to do to compete in the job market—the DOL revision of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles has moved toward producing a uniform nomenclature for thinking about job-specific knowledge, skills and aptitude. The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the work of the new Skills Standards Board will build on this to enable us to develop a clearer picture of what adults need to be able to do to attain and retain employment in specific industries.

Measuring progress toward Goal 6 is only one part of the effort the Institute and the Goals Panel are engaged in. Our organizations are also invested in facilitating progress toward that goal. We believe that developing a consensus on what knowledge and skills adults need is a critical starting point for any effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of the programs that make up the adult education and training system—including adult literacy and basic skills education, English as a Second Language, GED preparation, and post secondary job readiness and vocational skills training programs. Such a consensus provides a mission and unified sense of direction for that system and, as a result, leads to clear and measurableable objectives for evaluating the system's effectiveness. Equipped with these performance management tools, we can continuously improve our capacity to help adults learn what they need to know and be able to do in order to fulfill their roles and responsibilities in their families, communities and workplaces.

Thinking ahead to these future uses of a consensus vision of Goal 6, those of us involved in this project at the National Institute for Literacy and the National Education Goals Panel wanted to make sure that the vision we developed was firmly grounded in adult experience. Therefore, in addition to commissioning papers from professionals in the areas of education and public policy,[4] we designed our "Open Letter" to reach out to adult learners themselves to ensure that our customers were active participants in this process.

Over 1500 adult students participating in 149 adult programs responded. They were teen parents, grandparents, and single adults looking forward to raising a family. They were native-born Americans, immigrants from Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Mexico, and refugees from Southeast Asia, Latin America and Russia. They included:

- AFDC[5] recipients participating in JOBS programs in Auburn, Alabama; Perkinton, Mississippi; and Odessa Texas;
- GED students from Maryville, Tennessee; Charleston, West Virginia; and Anchorage, Alaska;
- Inmates in state correctional institutions at Corcoran, California; Winchester, Kentucky; and Palestine, Texas;
- Residents of a drug treatment program in Newtown, Connecticut;
- Residents of homeless shelters in Tucson, Arizona; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Seattle, Washington;
- Participants in ESL programs in Denver, Colorado; Bradenton, Florida; and Cicero, Illinois; and
- Working men and women participating in programs in their workplaces in New Bedford, Massachusetts; Valley, Nebraska; and Hato Rey, Puerto Rico.

Samples of their writings, chosen to reflect the rich diversity of response, are included in Part II of this publication.

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[4] Papers commissioned focus on the relationship between literacy and citizenship, family, welfare, and workforce issues, as well as current efforts to develop skill standards for occupational clusters.

[5] Abbreviations used here include: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program of the Family Support Act; General Education Diploma (GED) classes for students working toward a high school diploma; and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults whose native language is not English.

We asked adults to give us guidance in two areas. First, we asked for their definition of the two areas of adult experience framed in the Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning Goal. Second, we asked them to tell us what knowledge and skills they would need to perform effectively according to their definition of each area. Our questions asked adults to complete these thoughts in their own words:

- *In my community, competing in the global economy means...*
- *To me, having the knowledge and skills to compete in the global economy means...*
- *To me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means...*
- *To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship you have to be able to...*

What the Adults Said

Overall adults responded fairly directly to these questions about the meaning of Goal 6 in their lives. While each response conveyed the rich particularity of that adult's own experience, we could also see strong patterns emerging across the entire set of responses. These patterns shape a common set of customer-driven goals for adult literacy and lifelong learning that are grounded in a set of contexts that reflect how adults see their roles as parents, citizens and workers and a set of purposes that reflect how adults expect literacy and, more broadly speaking, education, to prepare them to fulfill these roles.

As adult educators and policymakers we were most struck, in analyzing adults' writings, by the consistency with which these purposes emerged. We are used to thinking about literacy education in terms of specific skills adults need to develop in order to perform specific tasks and practices that are part of carrying out their roles and responsibilities. When we think about goals for our programs, we think about them in terms of very specific accomplishments. We talk about adult learners coming to programs to build the skills that will enable them to get a driver's license, to pass the GED, to qualify for citizenship. Or, if our programs are supported through Federal or State resources dedicated to a specific goal like JTPA[6] or JOBS, we talk about enabling students to build the skills and knowledge they need to make a successful transition to vocational skills training or employment.

The 1500 adults who participated in this project all identify specific learning goals and objectives of this sort, enumerating a dizzying variety of skills they want to be able to develop so they can perform an equally impressive array of tasks they define as critical to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as parents, citizens and workers. *When we talk about "purposes" here, however, we are not talking about these context- or time-specific accomplishments, but about more fundamental purposes that express the social and cultural meaning or significance of these accomplishments for individuals engaged in defining themselves as competent actors in the world.* These purposes that surface again and again in adult writings are:

[6] The Federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) supports basic skills education and vocational training to prepare disadvantaged adults for employment.

- Literacy for Access and Orientation...
- Literacy as Voice...
- Literacy for Independent Action...
- Literacy as A Bridge To The Future...

As we describe these four purposes in the next few pages, using adults' own words as much as possible, most readers will be struck by how familiar they are. These are what practitioners and researchers often focus on as the broad, ennobling purposes of *literacy for life.* These are also the purposes many worry will be lost if national and state programs focus on literacy as preparation only for specific contexts, especially for the workplace.

What we learned from these adult perspectives on Goal 6 is that adult students don't make this separation between literacy for life and literacy for the workplace or for citizenship. While the specific tasks, roles and responsibilities vary from context to context, the four fundamental purposes remain the same. Moreover, these purposes of education—what adults need literacy for—drive the acquisition of skills and knowledge both within and across contexts. Adults seek to develop literacy skills in order to change what they can do, how they are perceived and how they perceive themselves in specific social and cultural contexts.[7]

While the purposes, roles and contexts are thus united in adult experience and—we will argue—should also be united in adult education, we must temporarily separate out the intersecting pieces of this whole in order to describe each piece carefully. We will first describe the purposes that drive adults' quest for skills and knowledge. Then we will describe how adults see their roles and responsibilities as workers, parents and citizens. Finally we will link the pieces back together, making clear why we must address all four of these purposes in every context in which we teach if adults are to fulfill their rights and responsibilities as citizens and be prepared to compete in a global economy.

Defining the Purposes for Literacy

One of the richest aspects of the adult student writings is their perspectives on what they believe literacy—and education—will enable them to do.

Literacy for Access and Orientation

Literacy for access and orientation includes all the ways adults see literacy helping them to locate themselves in the world. In some cases this is an actual physical or geographic location—reading maps and signs so they can find out how to get to a particular destination, whether it is a specific office within a building, a street address within the city, or in another city or town. An adult learner from Bradenton, Florida notes, for example,

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[7] See Hanna Fingeret and Susan Danin, *They Really Put a Hurtin' on My Brain: Learning in Literacy Volunteers of New York City*, (Revised, 1994) and Juliet Merrifield et al, *Everyday Life among Diverse Adults*, (Revised, 1994).

> "Say you have to go somewhere that you have never been before and you have to read directions or take directions, if you are illiterate you can't do that (0021)!"[8]

In most cases, however, the orientation adults seek from literacy is psychological or social. They want to be able to read letters and messages so they can "take care of business," to read the news so they know what's going on in the world. They want access to the broader world of ideas and opportunities that surround them and they know literacy—including the ability to work with numbers as well as to read and write for themselves—is the price of the ticket. One woman from Puerto Rico writes,

> "I want to be able to understand my child's teacher, and when I go to the mall and other places, I want to be able to understand everything (0027)."

And a man from Denver, Colorado writes,

> "Literacy is very important because every individual needs to be able to read and write, to get along in the world. When getting mail you need to be able to read a letter or a bill. It is very important to write a letter or maybe a paper for school or something for your child (0015)."

As these excerpts make clear, literacy for access and orientation enables adults to place themselves on the map of daily life roles and responsibilities, to place themselves in relation to the larger world around them.

The category of literacy for access and orientation includes the range of prose, document and quantitative tasks that are assessed in the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS). Indeed, adults' lists of specific skills they need for everyday life are interchangeable with the tasks on the three NALS scales. These include such reading comprehension tasks as reading the newspaper, signs, labels, maps, thermometers, bills, notes from the teacher, and books. These adult-defined lists include a variety of reading and writing tasks related to what NALS defines as document literacy, tasks such as writing checks and filling out forms of all kinds—forms for reimbursement, and applications for welfare and employment. One learner from Pennsylvania summed up in words very similar to the NALS definition of literacy, saying, "Literacy is the ability to read something and get the information you need then to be able to act on it (0089)."

Literacy as Voice

A second fundamental purpose for literacy that emerges from adults' writings is literacy as voice. Writer after writer talks about being able to communicate to others what he or she thinks and feels. This includes the ability to use written and oral language effectively in interpersonal and social situations. For adults who are not native speakers of English, literacy as voice includes fluency in English—knowing how to use the dominant language of this country to express thoughts, feelings, needs, experiences.

[8] The number in parentheses at the end of each quote is part of the coding system we developed for identifying each individual adult source. As responses came in, usually in groups from a particular class, they were placed in files, geographically, by state. The number appearing in parentheses here represents this geographic code. We have omitted the sub-codes assigned to each individual response within a file.

But literacy as voice is much more than this. It is connected with expressing the self and with being heard. For many adults, voting, in particular, and participation in the political process, in general, are prime examples of this understanding of "voice." An adult writing in Denver, Colorado says:

> "To me, having the right to participate in the political process means...being able to voice your opinion in many different ways such as voting, letters to editors, speech and flyers. This is a great way to be heard in government (0015)."

Another adult writes from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania:

> "I have to be able to criticize the government policy and community policy through my vote (0087)."

The adults who responded are concerned not just with saying what they think or believe but also with being taken seriously and having their ideas count. A woman in Joliet, Illinois writes:

> "Being a citizen with rights and responsibilities makes me feel very important. It tells me that my opinion counts in what happens in my very own community and I am just as prominent as the next person (0048)."

It is this sense of the power of words to make a difference in the world that links literacy as voice with self-esteem and a sense of self worth.

> "When you vote you have a say-so. You feel good about yourself because your vote does count and make a difference (0022)."

Literacy as a Vehicle for Independent Action

Adults also write about literacy as a vehicle for independent action. A young woman from a JOBS program in Auburn, Alabama writes:

> "Why do adults need to be literate? Adults need to know how to read and write because they will be taken advantage of because they don't know any better. People will control your mind, money and stay into your business and take over. To survive in the world you need to know how to read because you may be signing your life away or signing some thing you don't want and need. You won't have to depend on anyone else to help you do nothing. You can do it yourself (0001)."

Again and again, adults sound the chord of not needing to depend on others, of being able to choose to share something written with another person rather than needing them to tell you what it says. One man from Newport, Arkansas writes,

> "I never did put myself down because of it [not being able to read] but I had an empty spot inside me, always depending on someone to read things to me (0005)."

Literacy in this sense reflects the high value American culture puts on being able to do things for yourself.[9] It also reflects practical concerns about privacy and being able to protect your self and your family from those who might take

[9] See Fingeret and Danin, **ibid**, for a discussion of independence, dependence and shame.

advantage of you because you can't read and write. This sense of vulnerability is palpable in adults' comments. A comment from Nashua, New Hampshire is typical of many:

> "When you can't read or write you're in a world by yourself. When my husband died I felt helpless. I was unable to write my own checks and take care of the mail. Other people had to help me. I was determined to learn to read and write so that I can become independent (0077)."

Being able to read and write removes this vulnerability, providing the tools adults need to read the world for themselves. Another student from Auburn, Alabama adds:

> "It is important to be literate so you can be independent. You won't have to worry about people ripping you off or making you look stupid and you can set a good example for your kids (0001)."

One member of the research team coding for "personal development" noted the themes of personal independence and self reliance in almost every item. She found that "control of one's life, interpreted as the capacity to function as an independent adult, is a dominant theme; and literacy... is the dominant route."[10]

Being able to read and write are not the only skills adults need to be able to act independently. Adults also emphasize the importance of being able to make informed decisions. From Moss Point, Mississippi a woman writes:

> "To me literacy is about being smart about what is going on around you. All the issues you hear about on T.V. from politics to homeless people. I think literacy is knowing what you have to do to make the world better and helping in any way you can (0066)."

Again and again adults write about wanting to be able to gather all the information and analyze it for themselves so they can decide what is in their own best interests and those of their families and their communities. "I would like to vote," one adult from Eau Claire, Wisconsin writes,

> "but until I can read about the facts of candidates myself I won't because I would like to form my own opinion (0120)."

"Just imagine you're a citizen and you want to vote and you vote for the wrong candidate," writes another from Springfield, Massachusetts (0060). And from Denver, Colorado an adult writes,

> "Some people may not even know what they are actually voting for, and they need a chance to sit in and get all the views and thoughts about any situation so they know what would be best for the state as a whole (0015)."

Voting, of course, is not the only realm where decision-making is critical. "Literacy to me means I have a choice in my life," writes a student from Memphis, Tennessee (0096). And a GED student from Raleigh, North Carolina emphasizes the importance of decision-making skills in every aspect of his life:

> "Being literate to me means being able to read, write, function in the work place, local and abroad. Making critical decisions, being able to

[10] Louise Weiner, Background Paper on Domain A, Personal Development, p. 2.

> weigh pro and cons, being able to give positive feedback, being able to deal with people on every level (0080)."

A woman student from Baltimore, Maryland sums up this theme in words that express the underlying issues of literacy for independent action:

> "Literacy means to me having the power to make your own decisions for your self. When you have the knowledge of knowing how to read and write, you can take control of your own business. No one else can take control of your business, but you. Only you have the power (0054)."

Literacy as a Bridge to the Future

The fourth fundamental purpose of literacy is literacy as a bridge to the future. All of the adult writings are charged with an awareness of a world that is rapidly changing. This is not surprising since adults were asked to help us define our national education goal—to think specifically about what adults will need to know and be able to do in the year 2000. And they did. From Jackson, Mississippi one JOBS participant writes:

> "Without an education in the year 2000 we the people will be in serious trouble. Because now everything is moving forward fast and without an education you will be moving nowhere (0064)."

The fear of being left behind permeates the adult writings. An adult in Chapel Hill, North Carolina writes:

> "The world is changing so fast that you can't lose time (0083)."

Another in East Moline, Illinois is even more graphic:

> "Competition in the global community can run you over if you do not get the information required for today (0046)."

The surety of rapid change is what makes literacy and education, in general, so critical to the adults who responded—not just for them but for their children, also. The adults are very clear that without education, one can not keep up, because one can not change and develop as the world changes. A mother of three young boys from Vandalia, Illinois writes:

> "Times are hard and getting harder; education is the way to go, the road to go down. Without it you would be nowhere, your road will be long but not leading anywhere (0047)."

This same theme is expressed by a student from Olympia, Washington:

> "Not knowing how to read and write in today's society can be called "The Living Walking DEAD" because without the knowledge of knowing how to read and write you cannot move forward or go anywhere. You are at a major standstill in desperate state concerning your well being and survival (0116)."

Literacy in this sense is really lifelong education. A young woman from Hartford, Connecticut writes:

> "I feel that getting my high school diploma and furthering my education will help me advance in the corporate world today. I will go on to college and get my degree in the field that I am working towards, but I

> won't stop there! I will move on and broaden my horizons by taking up and learning more than one skill.... I may never know who or what I will be up against [when I compete in the job market] so I will prepare myself (0017)."

A Closer Look at the Contexts

Goal 6 sets the parameters for thinking about context here—adult roles and responsibilities as citizens and workers. Adults on the whole responded fairly directly to the specific questions asked. In the case of citizenship, they specifically told us what they saw as the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; in the case of the global economy, they told us what "competing in the global economy meant in their communities." Their thoughtful responses to both sets of questions enlarged our sense of citizenship and disabused many of our advisors of the notion that the concept of "global economy" is too complex for adults with low basic skills to discuss meaningfully. As we take a closer look at each of the contexts, we will point out the ways that the four purposes emerge within them. Sometimes, they are stated separately and explicitly. More often, they are intertwined, as they are in life.

Competing in the Global Economy: What it Means

> "It's not the U.S. anymore; it's the whole world working together (0063)."

Adult learners' discussion reveals a sophisticated understanding of the global economy and its impact on conditions at home—on their families, communities, and workplaces all across the country. While some adults write about the greater variety of goods and services made available at home through the global economy, the most common theme expressed is the impact of globalization on the loss or potential loss of jobs. A young woman in Memphis, Tennessee who has just completed her GED writes:

> "When Americans buy clothing and products made in Taiwan or Japan, you may feel you have saved some money. But by not buying American made products, you are putting your neighbor out of work (0096)."

Many workers describe how companies in their towns—textile and other manufacturing plants—have closed down, moving to places where labor costs are lower. Many also understand that the cost of labor is not the only factor that determines where the jobs go. Quality of goods is also important. As a Mesa, Arizona student writes:

> "The global economy affects all our lives in some way or another, such as loss of jobs.... The U. S. can retain its leadership by making good quality automobiles, electronics, and employ the American worker (0008)."

A factory worker in Providence, RI, reiterates this point, laying out plainly the connection between quality, jobs, and education:

> "The global economy, to me, is a worldwide system of producing and distributing goods and services. It is a system where competition is most

> important. We must be as good as we can be. In the shop where I work we build injection molding machines. They are very well made. They have to be because the people who sell the machines must be able to provide an excellent machine at competitive prices. Otherwise companies in the world market will get the business, and my job will be lost... I work hard, but things change in the workplace, making it necessary for me to keep learning (0092)."

Many adults share this worker's understanding that lack of worker skills and efficiency may result in jobs moving overseas. As one man from New Haven, Connecticut writes:

> "We need companies that will train the workers here in New Haven for new jobs. We used to have the old jobs that moved away. We can't compete for new jobs without education and training (0018)."

And a GED student from Charleston, West Virginia adds:

> "...competing in the global economy means having skilled people here to do the job, rather than paying an unskilled person from out of town to do the job for less. In other words, keep the money in West Virginia where it belongs (0119)."

Competing in the Global Economy: the Four Purposes at Work

Competing in the global economy requires skills and knowledge related to all four purposes of literacy. At the most fundamental level, literacy is necessary for access to jobs and for orientation to the demands of the workplace once you have that job. A man from Livingston, Tennessee writes,

> "Today in 1994 it would not be so easy to get a good job in a big corporation if one cannot read. But back then [in the 50's] workers were needed and their education level was not as important as it is today. So if you are a person out there who thinks you can get by without learning to read, you are wrong (0095)."

The recognition that jobs in the workplace today require more education is universal. A student from Omaha, Nebraska, writes:

> "In my community competing in the global economy means having the skills necessary to find a good job. Education is the way to address this situation (0074)."

A parent in an Even Start program in Moses Lake, Washington adds:

> "For me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy means learning new skills and being able to change and be willing to be retrained (0115)."

The theme of literacy for access and orientation emerges most clearly in this context as adults talk about literacy—and other skills—as the key to finding a job and being able to perform on that job once you find it. "It helps to be able to read if you ever want to get a job" writes a student from Dunlap, Tennessee:

> "You've got to fill out an application. If you don't know how to read, you're most likely not going to get the job. Go to an interview and be

> insecure about your self may make you not get the job even though you know how to do it (0098)."

And keeping the job is increasingly difficult without literacy skills, as one man from Decatur, Illinois makes clear:

> "In the beginning I was given verbal instructions on what to do on the job. Then a change was made and the instructions were written on sheets of paper. I was unable to read the sheets of paper, so I retired (0039)."

A production worker from Lincoln, Nebraska tells a similar story of change on the job:

> "As a production worker... I knew I would have to learn to read better to continue working at my job. Computers were becoming a way of life... I wanted to be able to work on computers and move with the new technology, but felt strapped knowing I had to do something (0075)."

There is an understanding here, that access to jobs in the global economy requires more than just being able to read. One adult studying in Helena, Montana writes:

> "I feel that today's workers need more skills and training in order to compete in the global economy... language skills, math and science skills as well as computer skills (0070)."

Overwhelmingly, adults feel that the only way they can be sure of continuing to work, both in the short term and in the future, is to learn about computers and other related technology. Again, it is adults' own experience of changes in the workplace operating here. Some adults write about the substitution of computerized machines for hand-operated ones, as in this comment from Hartford, Connecticut:

> "When I started at the garment factory I used a plain sewing machine. By the time I left, they were going to train me to use a computer sewing machine (0018)."

Others communicate their sense of how computers are transforming the way the work is done. A student from Michigan writes:

> "The company I work for hires somebody who knows about computers. We're a fast moving warehouse. They don't have the time to sit there and train somebody. Most of that warehouse runs on computers (0062)."

And a student from Portland introduces the role of computers—and reading and writing—in troubleshooting:

> "...there are symbols [on computer cars] that flash when things are wrong. If you don't know the symbols you have to read the manual. You have to be able to read (0063)."

The pressure these adults feel to keep learning in order to be marketable in the new economy is what motivates their sense that literacy is *a* critical bridge to the future. A student from Fremont, Nebraska warns:

> "Computer skills are going to be a must for almost everyone to have in the future. They will need these skills to compete in the global economy (0076)."

And a student from Charleston, West Virginia sums up:

> "Today's economy is changing, and we the people have to change with it in order to survive. Today most jobs require some type of computer skills. Nowadays we need more than a twelfth grade education to get a job. But training for better skills is not easy. You have to work long and hard on some skills that may be required by some companies. But you are not home free yet, because a good job is not easy to find even with your skills. You must know where to look for a job you want and like. The more skills you know and learn [the] better for you because more companies will hire a person with skills than one without them (0119)."

Adults' descriptions of what they need to know and be able to do to succeed in the labor market inevitably turn to skills and abilities we have associated with voice and independent action. A student in Mesa, Arizona writes:

> "To be able to compete and perform on a job not only requires reading and writing, but also being able to be self-motivated or an independent learner (0008)."

And another, in El Paso, Texas comments:

> "To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete . . . means punctuality, responsibility, and courage to progress and to have more work opportunities (0106)."

Comments like these underscore the connection in the workplace between the different purposes of education. Workers know that skills give them access to jobs and the ability to carry out their responsibilities independently. Skills also give them the confidence and courage to continue to learn so they don't get left behind. Having the skills and confidence to use one's voice, and to communicate with co-workers and supervisors is a theme raised by many workers, particularly those for whom English is not a native language.

"I need to speak English because my boss speaks no Spanish," writes one Spanish-speaking student from a Baytown, Texas, ESL class.

> "I also need to speak English when I go the safety meeting and I listen to the safety man talk (0108)."

Another adds:

> "It is important to speak English when receiving my boss's orders. I must listen to changes in the work schedule sometimes. Areas are added or taken off sometimes (0108)."

And another:

> "I separate rooms for conferences and I change people's offices. For this I need to communicate in English (0108)."

There are dozens of similar references to the need for building skills and knowledge in the use of English, including this one from Corcoran, California:

> "When I first arrived here I used to work during the day and study at night and I began to realize that according to my learning better opportunities were coming into my life. First I started off as a dishwasher in various restaurants, then when I learned a little bit of English they saw

> that I could be used to run the cash register, and they moved me to that position. When I learned more English, they again moved me to the position of waiter (0010)."

A few adults also write about the competitive advantage of being multilingual. A student in Sarasota, Florida writes: "Everybody wants to speak English and Spanish to get a better job (0023)." And a parent in a Washington state Even Start program writes:

> "I know I need to learn more English, so I can do my job better. My language is Spanish, and I can use that to be an interpreter...to compete for a better job (0115)."

As adults talk about the ways in which literacy and other skills will help them do better we have yet another example of how, in this context, literacy for access and orientation blends into literacy for independent action. A young man from a Connecticut Substance Abuse Treatment Center comments:

> "Having the skills to compete also means that I have the opportunity to get a legal job with legal pay and use it to my advantage and not disadvantage (0019)."

And a young woman from Chicago, Illinois talks about how "getting my diploma...will help me get a better job, make me more secure in my life, and work for the things I've always wanted to do to live a better life (0045)."

For all these adults success in the global economy is independent action because it means improved living conditions for themselves and their families. Adults who are on welfare or living in a homeless shelter write about "making sure my kids have food to eat, clothes on their back, shoes on their feet (0068)." For them, like this mother from Topeka, Kansas, the goal is

> "to get a job as well as keep that job to make a better future for myself and my two daughters. That is very important to me (0050)."

Those already working, like this Mississippi mom, write about "finding a high paying job making good money to take care of my kids and myself (0067)." In these ways, the family is the prime locus for evaluating one's ability to compete in the global economy. And while parents are concerned about being able to support the family in the near future, they are also looking ahead—to their children's future. A student in an Odessa, Texas JOBS program writes:

> "Kids should stay in school to receive training for better jobs. If they quit, they have less chance to make something of their lives and they are usually dissatisfied. This could lead to drugs, alcohol or violent crime (0101).

And a student in a New Bedford, Massachusetts workplace program writes:

> To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means preparing our children in the early ages of school for the future. In elementary school they should already start having classes with computers, electronics and a lot of the work skills they will need in the future. This should continue through high school, so when they go on to college they will be well prepared (0057)."

I am a citizen who believes in our flag and what it means to all of us. I believe all citizens have rights. This is a list of the rights all citizens have. They have the right to:

1. *Vote*
2. *Have rights*
3. *Speak out*
4. *Be treated with respect*
5. *Fight for what they believe in*
6. *Go to church*
7. *The right to a good education*

A good citizen's responsibilites are:

1. *To obey the law*
2. *To respect the flag*
3. *To vote every year*
4. *To take care of their community*
5. *To respect others*
6. *To help keep their community from violence*
7. *To fight for a drug free world*
8. *To help others in need (0051)*

Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

What is most striking about adults' discussions of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship is how personal they are. Like this list from a student from Winchester, Kentucky, most adults' writings are personal reflections on what it means to be a citizen, rather than formal lists of constitutionally-guaranteed rights and responsibilities as citizens of this nation. These tend to have more to do with citizenship at home and in the community and with those aspects of our rights and responsibilities as U.S. citizens that are related to voice and independent action—like voting and the First Amendment rights of freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion alluded to above and in these words from a woman in Charleston, West Virginia:

> "The best way [to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship] is to work with your neighbors and your community. Get involved with school, churches, and get to know your Bill of Rights. We should learn them and know how they can work for us. Every one who lives in the United States has that right. We have a right to a fair trial and to speak what we want when we want to. We have a right to bear arms and also to vote. These are just some of our rights (0119)."

Voting is central to everyone's list of rights *and* responsibilities. A GED student in Boone, North Carolina writes:

> "As a citizen of the United States, I have a right to voice my opinion about my beliefs. If we don't speak out about things that we believe in, they will gradually be taken away from us. So you need to know about the candidates that are running for the offices that make up the laws. So everyone needs to vote (0084)!"

While voting involves the right of freedom of expression, it also involves the responsibility of being an informed voter. An older man, from Durham, North Carolina tells us:

> "I'm learning to read and write, because I have never voted. If I become a better reader and writer I could read the newspaper, keep up with the news in what is going on daily. That would make me a better voter."

He concludes in words that remind us that the confidence to use one's voice grows out of understanding what's going on:

> "Not being able to read or write makes you feel powerless or nobody. That is why I don't vote because I could not read or write (0083)."

A student in Tallahassee, Florida also draws the connection between access to information and voice:

> "I never voted until about five years [after] I reached the age of eighteen. During that period I always took the issues for granted. Never realized how important they were. Then one day it happened. The economic slump. I couldn't find a full time job. I couldn't even fill out an application correctly to apply for a job. That's when I went to the newspaper job section. I couldn't even read it. Then one year later the price of gasoline jumped sky high, from $.79 a gallon to $1.55 a gallon. That was when I realized how important it was to be able to read and keep up with the issues. So in 1976 I voted in the president election and got back in school (0028)."

Exercising voice depends on more than simple access to information. As a student from Chicago suggests, it also involves developing and using those problem-solving and critical thinking skills that enable a person to make good decisions:

> "To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship I have to be able to read and comprehend what is going on in my city. Where I live are a lot of gangs and drugs. I need to go to school so I can get my GED so when it comes to a point where I could understand the issues, then maybe I could say: "Hey this is not right! It is time to make a change (0045)."

Being able to make a difference is central to the concepts of voice and independent action. For most adults, the places where they feel both the strongest responsibility and the greatest ability to make a difference are those closest to home.

Good Citizenship Begins at Home

Adults define the first responsibility of a "good citizen" as being a good parent—teaching their children right and wrong and preparing them to do well in school. The responsibility for the moral and intellectual development of their children forms the basis of good citizenship for most adults. Adults write about teaching children "to respect and obey the law," "about morals, principles and values," "responsibility," "to be productive citizens for the betterment of their family and country." They also write about the importance of ensuring that their children get, and value, the education they didn't get. A woman from Gulfport, Mississippi writes: "...I hate school. But I have a child that I want to grow up with an educated background and mother (0065)." A participant in a family literacy program emphasizes the same themes:

> "My attending school along with my daughter showed her that no matter how old you are, school is very important (0047)."

For these parents, being able to help their children with homework means the children will have a better school experience than they did. It also builds their own self esteem since they see themselves as someone their children can count on.

Citizenship: The Community

"As a citizen you have the responsibility to get out and do something for your community" writes an adult student from Stanley, Wisconsin:

> Being a good citizen means being a good neighbor, talking to them to see if they are ok, and helping your older neighbors out when there is a lot of snow at the end of the driveway (0120)."

What you do doesn't matter as much as that you do something. A woman from Cleveland, Ohio reminds us:

> "To be a good citizen, you need to be involved in different things like voting, volunteering, and caring about your community. If you don't care then you won't and can't be a good citizen...I care about the people in my community, so I volunteered my time and home so the councilman and community people could meet. We discussed the speeding cars up and down our street and we decided we needed a four-way stop sign and we told him our other concerns about our neighborhood. It went very nicely, and we let him know things he was not aware of so he was also thankful to have good citizens to take the time to help... (0085)."

The new realities of urban and suburban life mean that the responsibilities of good citizenship in many communities focus on two key issues: keeping kids in schools and trying to keep the community safe from drugs, gangs and violence.

> "Take part in trying to get children to stay in school and off the streets. To make our community safe the way it used to be (0008)."

writes a JOBS program participant from Mesa, Arizona. And a young mother from Hartford, Connecticut describes why, as a parent, she has to take responsibility to improve conditions in her community:

> "...you have to be able to get involved with the community. Before I know it my son will be school. I want a good school system, not one that's going to cheat him of education. I will lend my hand by going to my son's school and asking questions of how I can help out in giving him a better education (0017)."

A man from Pensacola, Florida adds:

> "It is my responsibility as a citizen of the United States to be the watchful eyes of the surroundings of my neighborhood. If any suspicious incidents occur in my neighborhood, I report it to the authorities (0022)."

"My life as a responsible citizen doesn't stop because I am in prison, " writes a man from Corcoran, California:

> I can set examples for doing the things I didn't get and do on the street. Like getting my high school GED so I can show that prison doesn't stop anyone from getting educated and understanding life values (0010)."

In all these cases, it is the sense of agency, of being able to do something that makes a difference, that is central to good citizenship:

> "To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, you have to be able to make a difference....I used to have the attitude that my vote wouldn't make a difference. I felt that the person I voted for wouldn't win.
>
> I have been reading different articles about the city I live in, and it's sad to see how it is deteriorating with the crime, violence, and neglect...I'm not looking to blame, so I ask myself what role do I play. If everyone

> had the attitude I did about voting, then whatever happens, they would have no say because they didn't vote.
>
> I realize that my vote is my voice in my community. As a citizen, it is my responsibility to exercise that right. I have changed my attitude about voting. I understand that I can make a difference in my community by getting involved in what is happening. I can participate in the neighborhood block watch. I can volunteer in the school systems, serve lunches or help out in the classrooms. I can escort children from school. These are ways that I can exercise my rights (0017)."

The contrast this woman student from Connecticut draws between her former attitude of apathy and powerlessness and her current sense that she can make a difference goes to the heart of the contemporary debate about values and civic society in the U.S. today. According to *Citizens and Politics: A View from Main Street*, so called "voter apathy" is really traceable to a pervading sense that individuals have little impact on national affairs.

> "People were willing to engage in civic duties in their neighborhoods or communities when they knew what to do and when they could see they made a difference. However, they could not connect with public issues as they are generally framed by the media and policy makers and did not know how to participate in politics at the national level in a way that would make a difference." [11]

A woman from Denver, Colorado makes this point quite powerfully, reminding us of the connection between voice and being heard:

> "To me, having the right to participate in the political process means that I have a right to my own opinion on the issue....I have a right to speak out and say what I may feel about the situation, and act upon it. I can also choose as my opinion to just not get involved and I have the right to just say that I just don't want to have anything to do with the political process...because it seems useless to get involved, they are going to choose who they want for the representatives, and they are going to do what they want, when they want....I feel that the political process pretty much already have their minds made up, about whatever goes on with them. And I don't like wasting my time on stuff like that, getting involved in the political process and my thoughts really don't mean nothing to them (0015)."

What Adults Want

1500 adults have told us what they need to know and be able to do in order to achieve Goal 6. Their words have the potential to radically change our approach to adult literacy instruction. In most adult programs we consider ourselves to be fulfilling our responsibilities to adult learners when we address those skills and tasks identified here as part of literacy for access and orientation. There is no question that the skills and knowledge we most often associate with basic reading

[11] Harwood Goup, *Citizens and Politics: A View From Main Street*. Dayton, Ohio: Kettering Foucation, 1993 as quoted in Virginia Paget, "The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship and the National Adult Literacy Survey," a paper commissioned by the National Education Goals Panel, to be published, June, 1995.

comprehension are critical for enabling adults to gain access to necessary information and to orient themselves in the world. But orientation and access are not goals in and of themselves for adults. They are a necessary starting point for engagement in the world.

As this paper demonstrates, when adults talk about what they need to be able to do in order to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, their definitions move through the need for access and orientation to focus on tasks and practices associated with voice, self reliant action and keeping up with change. They want to understand more about the world so they can teach their children about right and wrong. They want to be able to read the news so they can make good decisions about political candidates and issues. They want to learn new skills so they can keep up with changes in the world around them. They want to complete their own education to set an example for their children of the importance of education for survival and success in a rapidly changing world.

No matter how elementary or advanced their basic reading and oral comprehension skills, adults are also interested in learning and strengthening the skills associated with using information to have an impact on the world. They identify the need to develop the problem solving and critical thinking skills that have to do with analyzing and reflecting on information in order to make good decisions, and the writing and speaking skills that have to do with how you present what you have thought about so your ideas can be heard and "counted." Having such skills enables adults to "own" information, in the sense of being able to use it to accomplish their own purposes, and is also a necessary precondition for enabling adults to transfer learning from one discrete situation to another. From adults' perspective, this kind of learning transfer is critical to not being left behind.

Policy and Program Implications

There has been much discussion at the state and federal level of the fragmentation of the adult education and training system. Because service delivery has been funded through a variety of federal and state mandates focused, in some cases, on specific populations, and in others, on specific goals, there has been no consensus on the goals or mission of the adult "second chance" delivery system across these various programs. Local providers of adult literacy and basic skills find themselves in the position of operating under competing mandates from sister agencies as they attempt to provide appropriate services to the adults who reside in the communities they serve. There is one set of rules governing adults who are on welfare, another set governing adults who are displaced workers, another governing at-risk youth, and yet another, governing refugees and immigrants. Focused on meeting the requirements of these various programs, providers of literacy services have found it difficult to focus on the common strands of purpose or mission that unify their efforts. And this fragmentation has been reinforced by our tendency as educators to divide up what students need to know and be able to do according to school-generated subject categories: in K–12, we separate American History from Civics from Biology from Reading. In Adult

Education, we separate Adult Basic Education, pre-GED, ESL, Spanish Language Literacy, and Foundations of Math.

When the President and the Governors agreed to formulate a set of National Education Goals, they were motivated by a desire to re-focus the nation—and educators in particular—on the purposes of education in America. Our restatement of Goal 6 goes one step further. It refocuses us on the purposes of education as defined by the customers of that education:

> By the year 2000 every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to orient oneself in a rapidly changing world, to find one's voice and be heard, and to act independently as a citizen and as a worker, for the good of one's family, one's community and one's nation.

In this rephrasing of Goal 6 we have tried to accurately reflect the relationships adults express between the four fundamental purposes for education. We have merged the purposes of access and orientation and bridge to the future in order to express adults' sense that what you need to know to have access to information and to orient yourself keeps changing as the world changes. This emphasis on continuous learning for continuous growth is the essence of Goal 6—lifelong learning.

And we have explicitly linked the concepts of voice and independent action to adult roles and contexts in order to make clear adults' sense that the motivation for learning comes from their roles and responsibilities as parents, citizens and workers.

Moving from this customer-based definition of Goal 6 to a system that enables adults to achieve this comprehensive vision of what it means to be ready to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship is a journey of many steps. The first important step is to engage teachers, administrators and policymakers in thinking about and discussing the implications of this vision for our field—for what we teach and how we teach it, and for how we define and measure success. Through dialogue with these groups over the next few months the National Institute for Literacy hopes to develop a broad consensus on this new mission for the field, to gain clarity on some of the major questions this mission raises about our service delivery system, and to define some pilot projects that might enable us to explore the implications of this vision in key contexts with key groups of adult learners. Some of the issues we have already begun to think about are:

- If we do accept these four fundamental purposes as a touchstone for program quality, how does it change how we teach? In other words, if a goal of every program is to help adult learners find their voice and be heard, what would a teacher do in class? What kinds of activities would he or she emphasize? What kind of skills would he or she give learners the opportunity to develop and practice? What kinds of experiences would he or she have to encourage outside of the program? How would he or she assess learning and achievement?
- How would the ways in which we address these four purposes change as we move from programs addressing one population or one context to another? How would the content and structure of education differ in family and workplace literacy programs?

- Does this framework of four purposes enable us to maintain a sense of unity to the field, while supporting the development of programs and curricula appropriate to different contexts, including the workplace, the community and the family? Can we work within this framework to address the special needs of particular groups, eg. adults with learning disabilities? Non-English speaking adults?
- Does this framework of four purposes help us identify key values and key requirements for organizational excellence in adult literacy and basic skills education programs?
- How does this framework help us link adult literacy and basic skills education with work already going on to develop skills standards for specific occupations? Should it lead to clearly articulated content standards for the various contexts relevant to family, citizenship and work? How does it fit with current efforts to develop content standards for ABE math? Does it enrich these efforts or pull them off track?
- How does this framework change how we think about—and measure—learner progress and success? Would we need new approaches to learner assessment and program evaluation? New instruments?

Over the next few months, the National Institute for Literacy will be working with stakeholders in the adult literacy system nationwide—both within government and in the private and not-for profit sectors—to identify these and other questions, to begin to find answers, and to set a timetable for progress and success.

There is no question that the scope of work implicit in this vision extends far beyond the reach of adult literacy and basic skills programs. It is a scope that we could easily identify as appropriate to the whole realm of literacy and lifelong learning envisioned in Goal Six for it is, in fact, what adults need, in order to be literate, compete in a global economy, and exercise the rights and responsibilities of a citizenship. It seems the right place to start: a place of orientation that is worthy of our charge as adult educators that cannot fail to help adults steer their own course.

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Part II

Voices of Adult Learners:
Perspectives on Goal 6

"What it Means to be Literate..."

What is literacy?

Literacy is being able to read anything that you want to read and understand. Anything that you want to read and not to be able to read is like one world with one door to enter and nothing is there. Literacy means to me being productive in the work place. To share your thoughts we learn to share things with each other that I haven't been able to do before. Literacy to me means I have a choice in life.

I can be a part in our voting system. I can be a part in shaping my community and also in understanding something that goes on in our society and government.

Because of literacy I have been freed from this dark world. Because of literacy I have 1000 doors that I can enter now and if it wasn't for literacy sometimes I wonder where I would be.

I cannot see these problems being solved by the year 2000 unless our government addresses this problem. I can't see that every American would be able to read by that time because this problem is eating away at the very core of our society.

Each of these problems can be solved but our help is needed. It is needed now. We must all be involved in this process. First we must insure that literacy programs are available in the work place. To be a part of a global economy we must be productive in the work place.

if it wasn't for literacy sometimes I wonder where I would be

Ernest Carr
Memphis Literacy Council
Memphis Tennessee

Education is the most important thing for a person to have. Without education you can't get ahead. I'll use myself for an example. I'm attending the CCP learning center at the Tri-County Urban League in Peoria, IL. When I first started there my test scores were very low. I felt embarrassed and didn't want people to know that I couldn't do the work. I really had to push myself to learn. I felt ashamed when I asked the teachers to help me. I just felt lost and uncomfortable. After I kept on working I started learning. I know there's someone out there like I was. If only they would go back to school they would feel better about themselves.

In the year 2000 people are going to need a better education. They are going to need reading skills, because if they can't read how can they survive in there daily lives. They will need knowledge in computers and electronics. People will need to apply themselves more, then they will be better prepared for the year 2000.

Elaine A. Butler
Tri-County (Peoria) Urban League
Peoria, Illinois

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What literacy means to me

Literacy means how to read, spell, write and how to work in the workforce. Literacy includes being able to read the newspaper and keep up with the daily news, business and world affairs. Before I learned how to read I wasn't able to read books to my children. Now that I can read better, it fills an empty space inside me.

Reading the Bible was very difficult for me. Everybody in the church would help me with the words I didn't know. They can see a big improvement in my reading since I started Adult Education. It's kind of embarrassing not being able to read, but you can't just give up on it. You've got to keep working at it. You would be surprised at the people that will stand behind you and work with you, even close relatives. There is no sense in being ashamed of it. If you keep it back, you never will be able to learn.

I used to pretend to know how to read with some of my friends. They would hand me a piece of paper with a joke on it and I'd just glance at it and laugh and go on. Most, I'd say 60%, of my friends never knew that I couldn't read. The only people who knew were people that were close to me, went to church with me and my bosses. I never did put myself down because of it. But I had an empty spot inside of me, always depending on someone to read things to me. I was mechanically inclined so I had to take jobs more or less pertaining to mechanics. It was more low paying jobs. It limited me. It just holds you back. A lot of people are fortunate. They work around it. They have a higher position or opened their own business.

Learning to read can open a lot of new doors. I was a farm manager, I've done farm work all my life. It was difficult for me to keep up with all the paper work. I could keep up with their time, order fertilizer and things like that. As for wanting to write something down on paper to remember something later on, I couldn't do it. I'd just have to make different marks to remind me.

I never really had a low self-esteem but I felt bad about myself because I knew that I was limited. I've always strived to do better in my life.

In conclusion, I'm succeeding in college even though I still need help with reading and spelling. I have help with special tutors and my instructors are very understanding. It's hard work and its going to take me a while, but I can see success down the road for me. I don't really have a choice since my injuries knocked me out of my physical work, I've got to finish. If it weren't for my injury, I'd have improved my reading, but I wouldn't have taken the college courses. I'm happy with the course my life is taking.

Tim Wilson
Arkansas State University-Beebe
Newport Adult Education Dept.
Newport, Arkansas

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What literacy means to me

Many people are considered literate if they can write their names and a few simple sentences. A six year-old could do that much. But, could a six year-old read Steinbeck or Hemingway? Of course not. I think that being literate is a skill that everyone needs in order to be a productive citizen, but it is a skill that must be learned with time and persistence. A person can know how to read and still be illiterate if he or she does not comprehend the reading material. When you can read and totally comprehend what you have read, then apply that knowledge in every day life, then, and only then, may you consider yourself literate.

From my point of view literacy means freedom. Being a literate person gives me the freedom to learn many things that I might never have known if I were illiterate. Being literate also allows me to express my thoughts and innermost feelings without having to speak a word or tell a soul.

I believe that literacy is a privilege that is given to every American. No one should take something so great for granted.

Shannon Martin
Quickstart Plus
Gulfport, Mississippi

When you can read and totally comprehend what you have read, then apply that knowledge in every day life, then, and only then, may you consider yourself literate

What it means to be literate

To me, being literate means having the skills and being able to use one's knowledge to learn. Having these skills and using the skills of literacy is something I have longed for and have admired in others.

When one sees these people who have the skills and the knowledge, but are not using them to their potential or they have a lack of self-esteem, I feel they too are at a loss.

It hurts me to think that a gift of literacy was given to them and it is being ignored; because, the skills they have are the tools to opening the door to a world of choices. Choices can take a person wherever one wants to go. All one needs is the dream and the self-esteem it takes in getting there.

I feel saddened by those people who have the literacy skills but do not use them to their fullest capacity because with these skills comes knowledge. When one does nothing with their skills and sit and complains, and feels that life owes them, I feel that they too are handicapped. Their lives may have a void in it, some sense of failure, and even worsened by having a negative outlook towards life. This alone could trigger lower rates in learning for them.

I think of the human brain as a finely tuned race engine. An engine that is finely tuned runs flawlessly, but even a slight change in the timing can make a difference in its performance on the race track. This difference is how one learns. We have come to realize that people learn at different rates, different levels, and yes, at different ages.

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I have been haunted all my life because I couldn't read

I have been haunted all my life because I couldn't read. I have been humiliated, embarrassed, and ashamed. I was once told that there was no reason why I could not learn to read, it was just that I had a mental block. I believed this and therefore I felt inadequate with myself. I also felt that I did not do enough myself with learning, and I finally gave up.

When one's reading and spelling skills are poor or none, everyday life some take for granted can be complicated. For me, filling out forms at doctors offices, registering my children at school, not going to a Sunday school class for fear of being called upon to read aloud in the group, writing out checks, going to social events that might require some form of reading and writing, and going to the polls to vote. I must say that even though these sound bad enough they are not as heartbreaking as the thought of not being able to contribute as much as I would have liked to my children's own learning. I dealt with these nightmares as best I could by preparing information ahead of time. However, by doing this I lived a life of deceit, because I didn't let anyone know I couldn't read.

When my husband saw an ad in our local newspaper for an adult literacy program, knowing my desire to read and to enjoy learning, asked if I would be interested. My first thought was Yes! Yes! Yes!, but my biggest fear of all as with any human being was of failure. I did not know if I could handle failure again. My desire to learn prevailed; I told my husband that I was interested in the program. My husband made the arrangements for me, and I was on my way to a new start. The program I started in is the Illinois Partner in Adult Literacy, also known as PAL. This program has given me a new lease on life. It's allowed me a better way of looking at myself. I know now why I have a difficult time with my reading skills; this program has helped me understand myself.

I was able to conquer the fear. By doing this I found that I liked myself. I feel you must like yourself to succeed in life. This program helped me to find the key to my inner self. When I came into the program, my reading skills were at the third grade reading level. Now, I am at the sixth grade reading level—a door has truly been opened for me.

Now at the age of 45 years, I plan on continuing to improve my reading skills as well as my spelling skills. For with out the Illinois partners in Adult Literacy program, the investment of there teachers, tutors and program directors this would not have being a possibility for me. These tutors are patient and understanding they give of themselves. They give their precious time, they give their knowledge, they give their friendship, and they gave me a new life. This is truly a gift of caring and I thank them. I hope someday I too can help someone else.

What does it mean to be literate? It means one can continue to learn thought life; it means knowledge; it means having choices; it means change, and most importantly I feel literacy means a new life!

Deborah Sue Weinberger
Project PAL
Martinsville, Illinois

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My testimony

Illiteracy is a well-kept secret in the community. It is hard to admit you can't read, or read very little; especially when others around you can read fluently. You feel ashamed embarrassed, and afraid about what people think of you or your family. Illiterates are afraid of disgracing their families. Bluffing becomes a way of life. I know because I've been there.

One of my desires was to read the Bible more fluently and understand what I was reading. I couldn't read very well six years ago. As a production worker at Square D Company I could see many changes being made and knew that I would have to learn to read better in order to continue working at my job. Computers were becoming a way of life at Square D. I wanted to be able to work on the computers and move with the new technology but felt strapped knowing I had to do something.

Then a friend told me about the Literacy Council. At first I was afraid and nervous. Lois Poppe the director made me feel comfortable right away. I felt I could learn to read better because of her interest in literacy and my own desire.

I attended school until the 11th grade and still had difficulty reading. I was always in special classes. Years later, I did get my GED. But I still needed help with reading.

We, as a family, are determined to break the chain of illiteracy for the next generation

With Lois's help and the Literacy Council I started reading classes. I wasn't aware of the benefits my family would receive just by my reading. All three of my children have reading problems. The longer they stayed in school the harder it became for them. Our oldest son JR graduated from Northeast High School. Our second Son, John dropped out after the eleventh grade but received his GED. Tracy, our daughter dropped out after the ninth grade. My husband Jerry and I were heartsick. Tracy did become pregnant that fall and our lives changed. She is now married to a wonderful man Tom and working on her GED. Our granddaughter Talisha is wonderful. We started teaching her sounds before she was born through tapes and reading to her. Our daughter, Tracy is in the literacy program.

We, as a family, are determined to break the chain of illiteracy for the next generation. I think—"If only I had the skills to read when my children were growing up." But, I have found out that it's never too late to make a difference in someone's life. My life has changed tremendously since I can read better. I am not afraid to ask for help.

Esther Steckly
Lincoln Literacy Council
Lincoln, Nebraska

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Literacy is the most important part

Literacy is an important part of our society. Literacy is the power and the knowledge to be able to look at something and know what it says or means and to be able to express your feelings on paper by writing. Without literacy we wouldn't be able to communicate to others unless they were close enough to talk to. Nothing would ever be told to the public about what's going on because there wouldn't be a newspaper to read. Literacy is the most important part of learning.

Amy Ebenal
Bellingham Technical Center
Bellingham, Washington

How being literate makes a person feel

I can remember being a kid in 8th grade; I couldn't spell three letter words. I didn't know how to read or do math. I quit going to school. I just felt like I was always going to be the dumb kid like everyone said I was. I felt that school didn't have anything for me. I ended up on the streets and doing drugs and other things to live from day to day.

I think being literate is being free. I think a person is not alive until they learn

The first time I really knew I needed help was after I had my kids, and I got a divorce. That left me with all the bills, and running the house. I was left with collection, people calling me and writing me letters. I couldn't read the bills and didn't know who they were from. I could not even pay the bills because I didn't know how to do math.

This is how I found out I was illiterate and needed help. There was a lady named Cathy who was talking about school, and I started asking her questions. I asked her where the school was, how to get there, and how much it cost.

I did go back to school, but I had to overcome what people always told me: I would never learn. I had a lot of trouble of letting people know I was having trouble in my work. I was afraid of being made fun of. I had to learn to let my guard down and live for the first time. I did finally overcome my feelings. I think being literate is being free. I think a person is not alive until they learn. I never knew how much I had missed until I became literate. I feel that being literate has made me a living person. I can be anything I want to be; that's what literate is to me. I can do anything I want to. I feel that I'm alive. I can be and do for myself and feel good that I did it myself. I think being literate means I can be the women I want to be and the mother my kids need. I know that I can make it now all by myself. I can now look back and say I was a dead person before I went to school. I started school in the year 1989. I have just taken my GED and got a score of 203. I know I will get my GED this spring. I won't ever give up.

Leresa Reed
Let's Help Education
Topeka, Kansas

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I'm able to read and write more than I have ever before

The literacy program

I am writing you about the literacy program. I attend the Adult Learning Center, Pascagoula MS. Since I have been coming I'm able to read and write more than I have ever before. There are a lot of things that I can do on my own, without asking someone to help me or do them for me before. Since I have been coming to this program I can go grocery shopping, and read labels. I can go out and eat in restaurants, because now I can read the menus. I can drive on long trips, because I can read the maps and sing while I drive. Finally, I can read for pleasure and that is a real joy. Since I've been participating in Math classes I have learned how to write out a check from my checkbook.

I have learned to read my bible. I have learned to find different scriptures in the bible. I've learned to understand more of what I read. Learning to read has also helped my self-esteem. Self-esteem is an important factor in all areas of our life and it affects our relationships with other people. Our relationship with our children and our relationship to the community in which we live. Project Image is teaching me how to increase my self-knowledge about myself. To look at things about myself and see what I would like to change about myself.

I am learning a lot of new things at the Literacy Program. Giving thanks and honor to God first of all, and giving thanks to the Literacy Program for being a part of my life.

Cora Lee Rodgers
Quick Start Program
Gautier, Mississippi

Education

Education did tremendous work in my life, so I realize it is like the food we take to exist. Every time I think about this, I thank God for creating me as a human being. Animals don't need to be taught about literacy because all they worry about is what to eat, when to sleep, and nothing else. On the other hand, people have unlimited brain power which enables us to have great success. I admire all these abilities. If we have the will to complete our desires by trying hard, we will have better opportunities.

If I were ignorant, I don't think I would enjoy most parts of my life. I am continuing to learn anything that is provided to me. I have been studying for two decades of my life, so I can lead my life's future in to a better, higher place. And I won't stop until all those possibilities are consumed by me. I hope that by the end of my life, I'll be satisfied with the things I have fulfilled.

Chin Schramm
Advanced ESL
Fayetteville Technical Community College
Fayetteville, North Carolina

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The importance of being literate

It is important to be able to read and write as a mother in this modern time, because education is important to be a role model for your children. It's important to know how to read in order to help your home run efficiently, such as: school papers from your children school, to prepare dinner from a recipe, go shopping trying to compare prices, instructions for medication in the home. This is why it is so important for a mother to know how to read and write.

It is important to know how to read and write to hold a job. To enable you to fill out the application, to use computer work now days, and to drive to work, you will need to know how to read as to where you are going. To work on a job, if you can't read you can easily get hurt from not being able to read safety instruction. It is especially important to know how to read when it comes to signing legal papers, because if you don't know what you are signing you could be signing your life away.

It is also important to be literate to be a good citizen. Especially during voting time, you have to know how to read in order to vote for the right things and to be able to understand the news especially the weather cast due to road sights. To avoid being dependent learn to read and write. That way you would not be one of the victim to a scam abuse that goes on in the world today.

I can't express enough how extremely important it is for everyone to be able to read and write to succeed in the world today. If you can't read or write please seek help. There are many volunteers out there to help if only you give it a chance to learn.

Vontella Bass
Wesley Community Center
Phoenix, Arizona

I can't express enough how extremely important it is for everyone to be able to read and write to succeed in the world today

What it means to be literate

For me, being literate allows you to have good communication with other people. If you travel to any part of the world you can read about the different cultures and customs. Even if you have difficulty with the language, you can use a dictionary to get your ideas across. But, to be able to use a dictionary, you have to know how to read!

Agent Eva Figueroa Lopez
Conversational English at
a Government Agency
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico

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Why is it important for a parent to be literate?

It is important to read and write to help your kids. To read to your kids. When your kids are reading a book and asks you a word, if you can't read then you can't tell them. If you don't know how to read then you can't explain stuff to them. You'll sure enough feel bad if the child asks you what something means and you say "I don't know, baby. I don't know what that means."

Kids think parents should know everything. If you can't read and write, kids will notice. They may be ashamed and tell that "My mama can't read." May think the parent is dumb. The kid might say "My mama can't read, so why should I?"

You have to read to know what the notes say when they send them home with a kid. Like when teachers do. To know where and when to meet for meetings. You feel good if you can read the child's forms and fill them out. It makes you feel bad and ashamed if you can't read and fill out your own child's forms. When you take a child to the doctor, you have to fill out forms. You might have to get a prescription filled, and you have to know what it is and when to give it. You might give it at the wrong time if you can't read it.

It is important to read and write because there is so much to do as a parent. It's important to read and write to pay tax forms for your family. You might want to drive someday. You need to be able to read signs to go somewhere. You need to know how to read to budget when you go shopping for groceries and things. These days, you even have to know how to read to be able to wash dishes. It is important because a job might require reading. You might get to be President someday and need to read and write. You might want to have your own business, but then not be able to read or write.

You might get to be President someday and need to read and write

Sharon Finley
Yvonne (Sister) Freely
Martha Thomas
Elaine Lynch
Lisa Robinson
Ethel (Tina) Chisholm
Carolyn Jackson
Rose Brooks
Sandra Johnson
Lisa Ross
Laura Williams

Alabama Council on Human Relations and Family Service Center
Auburn, Alabama

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What literacy means to me . . .

My name is Sabrina Goldwire, I am a mother of 2 daughters. I did not finish school, because I hated school. I did not know how important it really was. I did not realize the effect it was going to have on me later on in life. Now, I have realize how important an education really is. I am now attending the Northwest Learning Center to obtain the required skills to move on to the actual GED course.

Literacy means to me having the power to make your own decisions for yourself. When you have the knowledge of knowing how to read and write, you can take control of your own business. No one else can take control of your business but you. Only you have the power.

When you can read and write many opportunities are available to you. You can finish high school, go to college, go to vocational school, own your own business, get a job and many more.

When you do not have enough skills and education, your opportunities are very limited. Other people have the power to make decisions for you. You can't get a decent paying job, you can't even get decent housing, living in poverty, low self-esteem, not being able to take care of your children as far as money is concerned.

I also went back to school to show my 2 daughters how important finishing school really is.

Sabrina Goldwire
Baltimore Reads, Inc.
Baltimore, Maryland

Literacy means to me having the power to make your own decisions for yourself

I believe what is most important to me is to know how to spell, read, write, and to do math. Without an Education we can't go anywhere in life. We do need our Education or G.E.D. to get a good job or to get anywhere in life today, and to know what is going on in the world today.

Like for instance: What is going on in the politics today, and what is going on in our community, and to see how low or how high our money interest is raising. Where is the government spending our dollar bills? Why are they always sending our government money over seas? Without our Education we would not know where our money is going. We would not know how to add or subtracted, When it comes to money. For reading we would not know who the President is or what the Year is or the Date or the Month. In History we would not know what WARS went on back when I can remember, and "What's up in the world today?"

So you see why we as Americans need to know how to Read, Write, History, and to do our Math. I am very proud to be an "American" today. We have the "Right to make a Free Choice?" on some of the things today, and having the "Right to make a Free Choice on Voting," and standing up for "Our Rights as a Free American Citizens."

Juanita Meyer
Frank Gordon Learning Center
Mesa, Arizona

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Since I began learning English

My name is Maria Martinez. I'm 31 years old. I was born in Puerto Rico. I came to the United States in 1984. I didn't speak a word of English when I come to the United States. As an army wife I was alone a lot, and I was afraid to go out by myself because I didn't understand the language. Eventually, I've got tired of staying in the house all of the time and also, "I don't speak English," when I did go out.

I started taking English classes in 1985, to learn the basics. I had the need to understand the language and to be understood. I didn't need an interpreter any more. I was able to say "please speak slowly, or repeat what you said, please I'm learning English," to me was better than to say, "I don't speak English." My life, was a little bit easier as I learned English. I took my drivers license test and passed it. I was able to read and understand the rules and laws I needed to know as a driver.

Since I began learning English, because is a constant learning, I'm able to participate in all kinds of activities; in the community, in my kids school, and in church, etc. Now I can help my kids with their homework, I can read bedtime stories to them, and answer their questions. I've also, got a job. The job had few requirements, such as, be able to write, read and understand English. Also, I had to be able to communicate with my employers and supervisor. If I didn't know English, I wouldn't qualify for the job.

I'm looking to the future with hope because I'm taking the time to learn

Now I'm looking to the future with hope because I'm taking the time to learn. This means better opportunities and a better future for my family and me. I believe the key to success is education. The more you learn the better the opportunities of having a better job, a better life and a better world.

Maria Martinez
The Literacy Program of the Weirton
Area Laubach Literacy Council
Weirton, West Virginia

What is literacy for me

I'd like to be able to write a letter to my Mother, and to other members of my family.

I'd also like to be able to fill out an application for part time work.

Finally it would be nice to just know how to spell!

John P. Smith
Basic Reading Program
Literacy Volunteers
Washington County, Rhode Island

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One more step

I feel it is very important to read, because if you don't know how to read you won't be able to cope with the world.

If I don't know how to read a menu in a Restaurant, I won't be able to know what kinds of food I could get there. Taking a RTD bus to get where you are going, to be able to read the bus schedule, and to know what name of the streets. So it could get you there. Going to King Soopers you have to be able to know how to read, the label to get what you want. If you buy medicine there you have to know how to follow directions, or you could make you sick.

When I go to K-Mart I see a whole lot of nice things I would like to have. I need to know how to read and count, So I could have enough money to pay for them.

If I know how to read, I can go to the Library and look at books, newspapers, dictionaries and other materials. I have to know how to read them. So I learn what is going on around the world. Being able to read about and know different parts of the world, will help me understand the news on T.V. to know how to read materials and get information I need to make me more aware of the world.

I am going on a tour with other people. I am going to need a map and to be able to read it and follow directions so I can keep up with the tour. I have to go to the information booth to get information about my trip so I will understand about the people and the world they live in.

Nancy King
The Adult Learning Source
Denver, Colorado

If you don't know how to read you won't be able to cope with the world

I want to read better

I like to read becase I have a son in school. He is a special little one. He is in a special class. I want to read to him. He like to be read at night.

I want to become better reader. Because I want to get my diploma. I hope to get my diploma. So I can help my son in school.

And I have a husband in school too. I went back to help my self and my son in school. So he can help himself.

Chloreetta Outland

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Why it is important to be literate

It is important to be to be able to read to my children to help them learn as well as experience things in life. When I was young I did not finish school therefore I know how it feels not be able to read or be able to do a math problem. So now that I have kids I know how important it for them to learn everything they can. We read each night.

It is important to be able to fill out a job application. I have experienced this as well. To go to a interview and be insecure about your self may make you not get the job even though you know how to do it. So it is important to be as literate as you can be. Never stop learning it is so very important to you as well as everyone around you.

To be able to manage money is very important to us. When we have kids of our own because we have to have money at different time's for things that are unexpected in our lives witch are many. Our kid's get sick or need things at school or are wanting something.

For these reasons I feel it is very important to be as literate as possible. It will only make life easier for us as well as our children. It is so very important for us to never stop learning.

Ginger Maxwell
Sequatchie County JOBS Program
Dunlap, Tennessee

To us literacy is the means by which people learn to read and write and better their lives so they can have more opportunities in life and reach their dreams of study and work thus improving the global economy. As a goup, Puerto Ricans competing in the global economy means creating new industries, developing our commerce and bringing employment opportunities. We must be more responsible as citizens so we have more tourism and thus more income. Being a citizen means having many responsibilities and rights. In our studies and work we must be more responsible and learn how to better relate to other human beings.

Isabel Guante
Sangrario Maria Guante
Vanessa Rodrigues
Yahaira Rodriguez
Maria E. Valdez
Delvin Vazques
Ramon Penzo
Axel Reyes
Jose Guzman
Elvin Cruz
Christian Minaya
Luis A. Dotel
Hector Perez
Adriana Berroa
Ricardo Martinez
Expedito Rodriquez
Ramon Collado
Juan C. Figueroa
Layra Montanez
Birmania Perez

Chapter 2 Students of Basic Education
Santurce, Puerto Rico

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The effects for the future on today's children

I'm a 33 year old mother of one. I'm currently pursuing my high school diploma. My daughter is currently a fifth grader. I wonder with the current drop out rate in our county if there is some possible way to encourage our children to stay in school.

I do see things in our system that are unusual ways of teaching compared to my years in school. Times do change. I am currently unemployed. A lot of employers require a high school diploma and experience. Unless you continue your education further than high school, there's little job aspects outside for you. Without an education you start at the bottom and work your way up at minimum wage. In the future there will be more computer experience required to work. I worry that my child will need a college education but will not be able to afford one. I don't want my child to struggle as I have. Our children need to have some form of computer educational skills. They especially need math and reading skills. My daughter struggles in both. So I wonder is our system doing all it can to assure children that they are learning enough. I do try to encourage my child to achieve her goals. In today's society that is very difficult. By the year 2000 my daughter will be 16 years of age. She will be a high school sophomore. What will our system be like for her then? What will her goals be? What will we need to know and learn to achieve those goals? I do hope our society is more aware of the need for a good education in all aspects.

So I wonder is our system doing all it can to assure children that they are learning enough

Lisa Oxford
Caldwell Community College
Hudson, North Carolina

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"What it Means to Compete in a Global Economy..."

I'm willing to do my part

Literacy is being able to read so that what you are reading is understood. Writing is another part of literacy but follows the ability to read. After graduating from high school I could not read and write. Sure, I did know some words but I could not read things that would tell me my rights and responsibilities as a citizen. In fact, I did not really know what a citizen was, nor how the pieces fit together. There seemed to be no way to know what the global economy was, nor how we were a part of it. When you can't do simple things like read a newspaper, it is very hard to learn about such things as the global economy.

Reading the Constitution told me about being a citizen. The 14th amendment gave me an explanation of who is a United States citizen—U.S. born or naturalized—while the First through Tenth Amendments specifically list the rights of a citizen. No country in the world can match these two. This wonderful document also provides for rules and methods for running our representative democracy. I could find nothing in the Constitution that told me of definite responsibilities of a citizen.

I do know that to be a responsible citizen I have to know that the people I vote for to represent me in the federal, state and local governments have good plans and abilities. These will be the people I feel can do the best job to represent all of us in this country. To reach Goal 6 we need women and men who will demand effective programs. My greatest responsibility in our system is to vote.

a newspaper, it is very hard to learn about such things as the global economy

The global economy, to me, is a worldwide system of producing and distributing goods and services. It is a system where competition is most important. We must be as good as we can be. In the shop where I work, we build injection molding machines. They are very well made. They have to be because the people who sell the machines must be able to provide an excellent machine at competitive prices. Otherwise companies in the world market will get the business and my job will be lost. The job is very important to me. It provides me with the money necessary to live on and it also provides me an opportunity to advance to a better job, and more money. I work hard but things change in the work place making it necessary for me to keep learning. I, and people like me, are important parts of the world economy.

Goal 6 must be important to those people I help elect. They have to provide a system where—unlike me—young people receive an education which prepares them for a part in the system. They must demand literacy. By doing this, the United States should be the leader in the global economy. I'm willing to do my part.

Robert Tooher
Dorcas Place Parent Literacy Center, Inc.
Providence, Rhode Island

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By the year 2000 I hope that every adult will be literate

First of all our class wants to express our surprise and gratitude for the chance to respond to this very important subject.

Some how we have to put a stop to young people slipping through the school system and not even learning how to read.

I feel teachers should be held responsible for this. Also stop rewarding dropouts by paying them to go back to school and start rewarding all kids that do attend school and try their best.

Provide more job training in high school and start computer and hands on science as early as the fifth grade. And prepare the kids for the real world the "work" world. Then for those of us that were not fortunate enough to get a high school education We all so need job training.

I think that all factories and companies and corporations need to be encouraged to provide on the job training instead of insisting on experience only all most everyone is trainable if given the chance.

Also all the above should provide child care at the work place to provide a safe and suitable place for the children, but most important so the parent can be productive and know that their children are safe and are being well cared for and very close. I think this would benefit the company as much or more than the parent and child.

I think everyone deserves a chance for a better way of life and a chance to work for or to earn it instead of being on welfare or taking a free ride.

Training and education will improve people's thinking and help put back pride anyone's self and in home and country.

I do not think anyone's self worth should be judged by degrees or lack of education. Here is an excellent example.

I called the unemployment office to ask if I needed an appointment and the lady asked me some questions and I answered then she ask me what grade of school I finished so I told her the fifth grade. So right away she assumed I was illiterate. She said well then I guess you will need help filling out the application. She made me feel so small. No one has the right to do that to another person. So perhaps people in those job positions need more training in how to work with people instead of giving them a stumbling block.

We want and deserve respect and with the chance for education and training for jobs we can learn so with this help most all men and women can and will be working and productive American citizens with more respect for themselves and their country and would be more concerned in voting and helping make change for the betterment of all man kind.

Gail Sams
Unicoi County Roundtable
Discussion Group
Erwin, Tennessee

not even learning how to read

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Competing in the global economy for jobs

I have worked for a telecommunications company for fifteen years. My job consists of repairing and maintaining company vehicles. The most recent job evaluation I received on 10-14-93 describes I have a fine attitude and I show very good effort towards quantity and quality of work—and treat company property as if it were my own. I'm the type of individual that gives that extra effort when needed. I work well beyond what my title requires and would be an asset to any business.

With the fast changing technology today every company is competing to be one step ahead of its competitor. The cost cutting effects by eliminating jobs are the most stressful burden on my life. The future of my job is threatened and will probably be eliminated. I feel the company I work for owes me retraining in a new position for the excellent work record I have. Approximately one year ago I took a technical telephone ability battery test for a new job position at work. I failed the timed test due to poor timed reading skills and test anxiety. On October of 1993 I contacted the Literacy Volunteers of America in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. I requested an appointment with Carol Gabler, the Executive Director. Carol asked me to take a test measuring degrees of reading power. The test consisted of 70 questions. I received a score of 98% with no set time limit. This proved to me I needed help in my reading skills of comprehension and retention as well as speed. My past reading interests consisted of magazines only.

The future of my job is threatened and will probably be eliminated

I have now been assigned a tutor. We meet once a week for an hour. I'm now studying for timed reading skills, reading books and learning to scan materials.

Because many people are attempting, through the literacy program, to improve their reading skills and are successful the global economy is affected for the good of all.

Adult Learner
LVA-Chippewa Valley
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

I work for a sign company and they get so many orders in for us to work on. The literacy program helped me to read the order so I can set the machine up to run the order but before I can run the order, I will put the order number in an E.M.S. computer. I also am reading more from my Bible and an article from the newspaper.

Ralph Kuykendall
Project READ
Belleville Area College
Belleville, Illinois

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Overcoming obstacles

When I was a boy growing up, my family moved a lot. My father and mother were migrant workers. My father and mother had a Model A car, and they used it to drive from Oklahoma to California to work on farms. Their education was only up to the eighth grade. Because we moved so often, I fell behind in school and never had a chance to learn to read very well.

When you cannot read, it is hard to get by, but with the Lord's help, I did manage. My dad found a job in Oklahoma City, and that was the first time I went to school regularly. After a while, my dad moved to Detroit.

I had so much trouble keeping up with the kids in Detroit schools that I finally dropped out. But when I turned eighteen, the Lord helped me again when I was hired at the Chrysler Corporation. I worked very hard, raised my family, and never learned to read.

Today, in 1994, it would not be so easy to get a good job in a big corporation if one cannot read. But, back then, workers were needed and their education level was not as important as it is today. So, if you are a person out there who thinks you can get by without learning to read, you are wrong.

So, if you are a person out there who thinks you can get by without learning to read, you are wrong

My friends at work did not know I could not read very well. I became good at faking that I could read, but that is the wrong way. It is better to read than to fake it. However, people get embarrassed if they cannot read well.

What are the advantages of knowing how to read better? There are very many advantages. For example, I am more confident, I can read a newspaper better, I am more informed about current affairs, and thus, I am a more informed voter. But most of all, I think it is a great thing to read. I am learning more all the time.

Harold E. Christensen
Overton County Adult Education
Livingston, Tennessee

To survive in the global economy is very fast growing. It's getting to the point that the older people are forced to go back to school to take college classes to get better paying jobs because they can't survive on minimum wages. Minimum wages are not enough to survive on. This is the reason I have gone back to school because I want to have a good paying job to support my children because, I'm a single mother with 5 children and I want to set a good example for them I want them to know that higher education is very important right now and by the time they get older it's going to be very hard to compete and survive in the forever changing world of the global economy.

Sabrina Rogers
Hamshire County Adult Learning Center
Romney, West Virginia

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The need for better education in a global economy

Education is a very important part in everyone's life. Without being well educated, it's hard to find a job. Believe me, I know! If I had gotten the help I needed in school, I wouldn't be where I am today: in an Adult Basic Education class. The best thing about being in the class is that I am acquiring skills that I did not learn in my previous schooling.

I graduated in 1983 but I don't really understand why I did. Although my math skills were adequate, my grammar, spelling, and writing skills were terrible. I really felt bad not being able to fill out job applications properly. Because of my grammar and spelling mistakes, I am sure I lost many job opportunities. As my daughter progressed in grade school, it became more difficult to help her with her homework. I gradually came to the conclusion that I needed to get into some kind of special program to help build my language skills, especially if I wanted to get into a college program. It was 1992 when I enrolled in the O.P.S. Adult Basic Education classes. I was at a fifth grade level in language skills, and now I am at an eighth grade level. I am finally learning!

I feel very lucky to have an opportunity to attend these classes now. I wish these classes had been available when I was in school. Hopefully someday I can repay everyone who has helped me, and I think I know how to do it. When I am all finished and my grade level is pretty high, I am coming back, not as a student, but as a volunteer to help others with their learning problems.

In my community competing in the Global Economy means having the skills necessary to find a good job. Education is the way to address this situation.

Laureen Angelo
Omaha Public School
Omaha, Nebraska

To be able to compete in the global economy, a person must be able to make a change toward the best in education and better skilled jobs. In order to participate in the educational challenge facing minorities today, you must enhance your ability to gain a greater education and maintain higher skill levels than ever before. A person must be at least willing to finish high school. It would be good to attend college, or obtain a master's degree, in order to live somewhat comfortably. In order to compete in a global economy, you must get educated.

Mary Jefferson
ABLE/GED Program
Cleveland Public Schools
Cleveland, Ohio

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To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means...

Literacy affects my job in a big way. If I can't read to match up the draft with the issuing bank letter, then I would not have a job. So in order to do my job I have to read. The more I read the higher I can go and the more money I will make. The faster I do my work the quicker the letters get to the issuing bank and the sooner the cardholder will have the problem solved. My time for getting the letters out is 21 days and if I can get them out like in 24 hrs. That is increasing our productivity. So literacy is very important in my job. The higher our productivity is the more money the bank will make. The more money the bank makes the more it can lend out to people the more houses can be built. Or new business can be started. So this helps the economy.

Patricia Lancaster
Memphis Literacy Council
Memphis, Tennessee

By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy means all Americans having enough education to buy and trade from other countries, knowing what competing with other countries means. Also we need to have the know-how to make good products to compete and survive.

In Kanawha County, competing in the global economy means keeping up with other countries and having enough skilled workers so we can compete. I feel that at this time we don't have enough skilled workers. There are to many adults that don't have an education and if we want to survive in this state we need to educate ourselves and be as skilled as our competitors. I also feel that if more Americans bought American made products we would be a much stronger nation.

To me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means getting involved with my children's schools and participating in activities that concern their well being. I feel like if our own generation can make a difference for our own children, we the people have to take a stand and start doing something about what we believe in.

To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship you have to be able to know what is going on not only in your community, but the rest of the world, and be able to try and voice your opinion to make a change. Not only for yourself but for all others that believe in doing the right things. If we don't start now the world as we know it will be no more.

Debbie Oxley
Garnet Pre-GED
Charleston, West Virginia

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What does it mean to be literate?

Illiterate is such a harsh word it should never be used in the English language. Literate is something that I don't mind hearing because it means a lot to me. It tells me I have achieved more than I had before. It means to have the abilities to read and write, it means more than that. It means to have the abilities to do math, be able to recognize and relate to different situations. To have a good job one has to be able to do basic mechanics, science, sometimes even social studies.

To me global economy usually means that I have to give to receive. It's just like the food chain; the grasshopper eats the ant, the fish eats the grasshopper, and we eat the fish. Our clothing, food, and a variety of other things come from this global economy.

To exercise your rights you have to voice your opinion such as voting at elections. I'm exercising my rights and responsibilities everyday by coming to school. So when it's time for me to take my G.E.D test, I will be ready. If it was up to me, I could already have taken my test but I'm too young. I'm capable of taking the full responsibilities of an adult.

In other words everyone has the right to be literate so they can assume the responsibilities of citizenship and earn a living.

Tina Jackson
Westside Center
Chicago, Illinois

We have had to improve our job training system and educational system so we can compete

Fifty years ago we had more factories, more farms, in many different parts of the country so we did very well trading among ourselves. But with time there has been changes in our country and the world. We have had to improve our job training system and educational system as well, so we can compete with other country's and to be able to produce things they wish to buy from us, in this way we have more money to trade with them for things we do not make. This is making more jobs for so many more people with better job training and higher educated people to find better job positions, which improves our chance for a better quality of life for all.

I do feel grandma and grandpa had a slower paced life style, but they did not have access to all the things from all over the world as we have today.

But on the other hand they did not have the chance of a greater education that we have nor for job skill training that is available to us today, because of our global trading and exchange of ideas, which will in time lead to more jobs and a comfortable way of life.

Rose Reeves
Leon County Adult and Community Education
Tallahassee, Florida

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My name is Jose Antonio Alcantar and I was born on July 22, 1934. I am an American Indian. My mother was Apache and my father was Yaqui. My father passed away when I was nine years old. At that time, my brother was seven years old and my sister was three. It was very hard for us but we made it with the little money that my mother made. I helped out by shining shoes. As I got older, I was a dishwasher, a janitor and also worked on a farm. My education had to be put aside because I had to go to work.

Right now, I am married and have seven boys and seven girls. My oldest is thirty-three and my youngest is five years old. I have eleven grandchildren. My wife and I are very proud of our children and grandchildren. We have always encouraged our children to get a good education.

I am currently attending adult education classes because I feel that it is my turn to go back to school and improve my reading and writing skills. Without these necessary skills, my chances of getting a good job are not good. I enjoy attending these classes because I am understanding what I read and write more than before. I feel good when I write a letter and the other person can understand what it is that I want to say.

The way society is today, a person has to be able to read and write well enough to be understood. If a person has a job that requires reading rules and/or instructions, it is important that everything that is read is comprehended before the job is done. If he doesn't, he may get hurt or cause someone else to get hurt. Math is also an important skill that is needed to perform certain jobs. Parents also should set a good example for their children. If the children see their parents reading and writing, it will teach the children to do the same.

If the children see their parents reading and writing, it will teach the children to do the same

I encourage everyone to stay in school and get the necessary skills that are needed to compete in this economy. It will benefit the person and our society.

Jose Antonio Alcantar
Pima County Adult Education
El Rio Learning Center
Tucson, Arizona

To me for every person to be literate would mean every person could fill out a job application better. This would give better job opportunities for young and older men and women. Crime would drop and it would get kids off the streets and in the work force.

Jan Potter
Watauga Campus
Caldwell Community College
Boone, North Carolina

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Being part of the global economy

I enjoy working with or around children. When I worked in a day care center I watched over young children while their parents went to their jobs, I got a salary for that. I was part of the economy. I gave a service and for that I was paid. I was an aide, but I feel I have the ability to become a teacher or the director of my own day care center. Therefore I am in an adult program to better my literacy skills so I can earn more money and be more help to the children.

One must be literate to get work. For the type of work I hope to be doing when I get my G.E.D, I need to read and understand math symbols, maps and words, and also know the proper end marks for a sentence, know where commas and things like that go in your sentences. I must know what makes day turn to night, or how flowers grow— basic things like that. The children might ask and my job would be helping them to become literate and if I'm not literate I wouldn't be able to help them.

If you feel something is wrong in your community, child's school, or job, etc., you have the right to speak up as part of the community, as a mother, or as an employee. You are also heard by voting. You could help elect a president, whom you would like to see elected. I was never really into exercising my rights as a citizen. It was never important to me, but as I am getting older I realize it is important.

Today I realize the importance of literacy, the importance of exercising the right to vote. There is no need to let these opportunities pass me by. When I improve my literacy skills I will receive my G.E.D to get the best job I possibly can. My service skills will be more appreciated if I'm the best at what I will be doing.

If you feel something is wrong in your community, child's school, or job, etc., you have the right to speak up

Maria Castellano
Westside Center
Chicago, Illinois

Competing in a global economy

In order for our society to compete, we need to be educated. To be literate is very important. My goal is to become a bookkeeper. I have to learn English, math, and computer skills. Right now I am studying English and math. Later I will take a computer class. I'm preparing myself for the future. I want to get a good job for a better life so that my children could have a good future. That is very important to me.

Lisa Yu
Culver City Adult School
Culver City, California

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Global economy

Competing in a global economy, to me, is very important because it helps to better the relations with other countries and satisfy human needs. That is why, indirectly it benefits us to be literate, so we can be the best. Therefore, competing for a better World, to me is a must, to be able to progress at all time so you never go into bankruptcy.

This applies to everything, I do it for my country as well as myself because I want my country, as well as myself to be the best of the best. Competition is important, it leads to progress and growth. So when one door closes, another will open and there is never any loss.

The goal is to give the best example, by doing good things, even when difficulties arise, by helping others achieve their goals, so we can change a style of life into a life with style.

Francisco J. Cianchini Sanz
Conversational English at
a Government Agency
San Juan, Puerto Rico

I'm going to become one of the haves and be able to say "Hey, I've succeeded!"

Being able to compete in the global economy is very challenging indeed. It gives me the honor and a great deal of pleasure to do what I should have done years ago. When I dropped out of school, it really put a hold on my life. I should have stayed in school from the very start in order to receive my diploma, but since I didn't, I still will have to compete in the global economy which has a lot to do with my life. It gives me a chance to go back to school to get my GED and to achieve a higher education to reach my goals. When I'm through with this, there will be a great turn around in my life. I will be able to do more for my family and will move them to a better surrounding. Maybe then, they will have a better impact on life. My children will make me the happiest parent in this world to see them finish school and to get a greater control over their lives. They can start a career of their own instead of relying on welfare for support. The skills that I need to do these things are to get my GED, go to a job training program, and move on to college to succeed in a higher education degree. I have to make a lot of improvement to get to where I want to be because I'm going to become one of the haves and be able to say "Hey, I've succeeded!" Communication plays a very big part in a successful life. I don't think that you would make it without it. All you non-educated—let's pep it up and go for the gusto! It's a good thing to compete against other minorities. I will succeed in the future and take part in the global economy.

Catherine Pendelon
Fatima
Cleveland, Ohio

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Competing in the global economy

To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means having an education, knowing and learning all I can about other cultures, and learning how to speak different languages. I also must learn what is more useful and important to employers, such as computer literacy and problem solving skills.

Education is critically useful to compete in the global economy. It must teach us reading, writing, basic math computation and problem solving. If we do not know any of these educational skills, we will not be able to get a decent job. What I mean by a decent job is a good, high paying job, not a crummy, low paying job for which you have to kill yourself.

Second, I say that learning different cultures and learning how to speak other languages are also important to compete in the global economy. Learning about different cultures is good because I might get a job working with all kinds of people. It's also interesting to know about other cultures. I or anyone could learn a lot of things such as what other cultures celebrate, their religion, how they learn things, and how their schooling works. To speak other languages is necessary because this world is combined with all kinds of people, and it's good to know how to speak other languages in case I have to deal or work with those people.

Finally, learning computers and problem solving skills is important in this world. Computers are being used for jobs, so learning computers and learning how to solve problems are important. Problem solving is very necessary. Without knowing how to solve a problem, the problem will continue to get worse. We need to use our mind and try to solve any problem until we get it right. I and everyone else need to know how to solve any problem because problems do arise in life.

I have to learn a lot of things to compete in the global economy. If you want to compete with the global economy, you should do as much as you can in life. Set goals, learn about what is necessary to complete your goals, and do whatever it is that you want to do.

Elizabeth Torres
Urban League of Greater Hartford
Hartford, Connecticut

learning how to speak other languages is also important to compete in the global economy

Illiteracy and global economy

If you are illiterate it means that you can't read or write nor understand and it is difficult to survive. You can't read newspapers, books, or help a child to read. If you are illiterate you can't read a bill or read the statement and write a check.

If you can't read you can't get a good job because you can't fill out the applications. Although, you may be lucky and have someone else complete the application and get a well paying job. To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy means each individual should challenge themselves. There are people over and under each one of us; some are skilled and some are unskilled. You should just compare yourself with yourself. We need the ability to function in order to produce. We, Americans could have the knowledge to compete in this world and to survive, if Americans could outstrip producing rates and fill empty spaces.

I speak from my own experience, I have challenged myself. I have noticed I have accomplished a great deal! I'm never giving up! Now that I have gone so far, why stop now?

Annette Diaz
Manatee Area Vocational Technical Center
Bradenton, Florida

Without a good college education your chances of mattering in the Global Economy are slim

I feel to be a part of the Global Economy you first need to be educated. Education is very important, that is why I'm attending a program at the Attleboro Literacy Center. I'm going to school so I may achieve my G.E.D. For without a GED or a high school diploma you can not attend college. Without a good college education your chances of mattering in the Global Economy are slim. Once I achieve my GED I plan to attend college to become a physical therapist. I would like to help patients that may have been burned or dismembered in an accident. My aunt is a physical therapist and she helps people get ready to go back out into the work world. While she helps people, she also makes a very good living. I want to be able to help the Global Economy and make enough money to live comfortably with my son.

Lisa M. Auld
The Literacy Center
Attleboro, Massachusetts

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What it takes to compete in the global economy

To me having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means having education, good communication skills, and self determination.

The first qualification is education. I feel that getting my high school diploma and furthering my education will help me advance in the corporate world today. I will go on to college and get my degree in the field that I am working towards, but I won't stop there. I will move on and broaden my horizons by taking up and learning more than one skill. For example, I am planning to learn to be a legal secretary. I will take up the usual business courses such as typing, word processing, basic math and English. However, legal secretaries work for law firms, too, so I will have to further my education by learning the law. There could be more than one skill that I could benefit from when I compete in the job market. I may never know who or what I will be up against, so I will prepare myself.

The second qualification is communication. Knowing how to talk to people and learning how to get along with people that I work around is very important and mandatory in anything that I do if I want to succeed. When I communicate well with people, they look up to me more and give me the respect that I deserve. I can benefit from knowing more than one language because it can help me to communicate with people other than those from my own nationality. This is also an important skill that will help me when I am looking to move up in my career.

The third and final qualifications are self determination and critical thinking. These two play a very important role in my future or anyone else's future for that matter. I will not allow anyone to discourage me from getting ahead. I want to be around peers who have as positive an impact on me as I have on myself. I want friends and acquaintances that will motivate me to move on no matter what obstacles there may be. Knowing what I want will help me make the right career choices, so my future will not be on hold. I feel that I have what it takes to compete in the global economy today and in the future. As long as I keep up the positive attitude, self motivate myself and keep my head held high, I know that I can achieve to a higher level when I enter the business world.

To me having the ability to compete in the worldwide economy means furthering my educational skills having good communication skills and being self determined.

Elaine Browdy
Urban League of
Greater Hartford
Hartford, Connecticut

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How to be successful in the global economy

While living in or competing in the global economy, being versatile is very important. I was taught a long time ago, when I was a little boy, to make sure that I learn how to do more than one thing and to be good at what I do. I was asked to consider if I just have one skill or talent, what I would do if something happened in that one profession.

In today's society, I have also learned to be open-minded. Meaning that, I have to listen to people when it concerns my future. I take suggestions, not just listen to them. There is so much knowledge offered today if you are just open-minded enough to let someone in your life and help you. Successful people are successful because they were taught well, and they are still willing to learn more and more.

Now let's talk about what you need to be successful. In my book, there is only one thing, education. If you have or are willing to get the proper education, you will be able to go to any lengths in our global economy today. If you don't have an education, your chances of competing are very slim; more like none.

So my suggestion is that you get any and all the education you can, be versatile, and open-minded. Only then will you be ready to compete in the global economy.

Prince E. Manns Jr.
Urban League of Greater Hartford
Hartford, Connecticut

To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means we need to have a lot of education.

We should have the education in many areas, like math, science, computers and high technology. The children need to start at a really young age. They need to study real hard in school because they are the next generation.

They need to be taught about these things, about telecommunications, biotechnology and microelectronics. These are the "brain power" industries and if we are to compete in the global economy we have to have the knowledge to do these things.

So in order to compete in the global economy, we have to really educate our children very well. They should be taught from a very young age.

Carol Coutinho
Workplace Education Project
New Bedford, Massachuesetts

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What literacy means to me

In America you have to work hard to survive. And to make something of yourself you have to have a education. For instance a G.E.D, you have one what does it mean? You finished school! What kind of job can you get with it, a normal job right. But this is America and a good education is the only way to get ahead in life and make money. Sure it takes lots of hard work (the best things in life aren't free). But don't we want to get to the top and be the best and the only way is knowledge, and lots of school. That or you can be dishonest and cheat your way to the top. What kind of self graduated and self worth would that give you? None!

Society is based on knowledge if you want to get ahead, and to do that you have to study and learn in whatever occupational field you choose to pursue. In my case business is the field I want to pursue. But I have lots of school to go to. In the first place I hate school. But I have a child that I want to grow-up with a educated background and mother.

What do you think this world would be like if only a few people were literate and the rest illiterate? The literate would run the world and we would be the slave, I really don't want to be a slave. Do you, you are without an education.

The bottom line is, if you want to succeed in life you have to get an education. Be smart, learn to read and write.

What do you think this world would be like if only a few people were literate and the rest illiterate?

Layla Tyree
Mississippi Gulf Coast
Community College
Perkinston, Mississippi

I was born in Los Angeles in 1954. I went to school, but I didn't learn much in my school. I had to come back to this class in the adult school, because I couldn't get a good enough job to support my children. Now I've learned how to read and write and I can help my kids with their homework. Soon I'll be ready to start a training program so I can get a better job.

I wanted to be a secretary and learn how to type, but now I understand about the changes in offices. I don't think the job I wanted will be hiring when I'm ready. I should have been born 15 years earlier! So I'm learning to print my writing on a computer, and next I'm going to learn how to repair computers and other machines. I think this will prepare me for a job of the future. I want my kids to learn computers and another language because everyone in Los Angeles needs to speak Spanish. My daughter wants to be a nurse or a paramedic, and that's a good job too. I'm glad I have a class that is helping me to improve myself.

Loretta Johnson
Culver City Adult School
Culver City, California

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I can improve myself

Work or labor is used as a name for the general body of wage earners. To compete in today's economy for the better positions and higher paying jobs, one must be educated and trained. Without these, the job market is mostly low paying and does not provide much security.

Kids should stay in school to receive this training for the better jobs. If they quit, they have less chance to make something of their lives and are usually dissatisfied. This could lead to drugs, alcohol, or violent crime. A person who is illiterate is one who can't read or write and usually never attended school. There are any number of good programs both public and private willing to help those who can neither read nor write.

The economy of today is such that what few jobs there are require training and education to be able to provide for a family or an individual. The professional jobs such as medicine, teaching, or management require college. The other jobs require at least a high school diploma.

Over the years, I have noticed that without a diploma, the job market was car hop, telemarketing, or fast food service. With an education, it could be receptionist, secretary, or clerk in a bank. I am going back to finish my education and receive training so I can improve myself.

Theressa Roberts
Odessa College Adult
Basic Education
Odessa, Texas

I am glad that there is a basic education program to help me get a start on my future

I need education. I am taking the basic education. I will need day care so I can go on and get better education. I will also need money so I would have to get a loan or grants, so I can have the money to go on with my education. It will also take lots of guts for me. I need lots of reading and writing skills. I want to go to college for more education. When I am in college, I will find information on the classes I need to get a good paying job, so I can help out with family finances. When I finish college, I will be able to get a job.

When I have a good job, I will be paying taxes. I am a citizen of the United States. When I pay taxes, I will be giving back to the state. If I did not have the education, I would not be able to get a job. I would have to be on welfare, and I would have a hard time getting by. I am glad that there is a basic education program to help me get a start on my future.

Sheryl Hill
Moses Lake Even Start
Big Bend Community College
Moses Lake, Washington

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Being able to compete in a global economy

I believe the most important way to Compete in a Global Economy and exercise the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship, is to know and understand what it's all about.

Being able to Compete in a Global Economy, you would have to know the world of businesses. Meaning, the world going against each other. For example, Americans are trying to go against Japan in different businesses. Our community needs to try to keep our children in school so they can get more educated. They need more education in Social Studies. In social studies, they teach more about government issues and political issues. We need our children to understand those issues. It's important for them to know at a young age, so as they get older they would understand the meaning to Compete in a Global Economy.

To exercise the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens, is to take part in the community. Take part in trying to get children to stay in school and off the streets. To make our community safe the way it used to be. We the people have the rights to take on the responsibilities of others who don't understand the meaning of right and wrong. I believe our children are our future. Our children will grow up to know the rights and responsibilities of others. The more we teach our children about drugs, violence, and gangs, the more our children will teach other children. Everyone has their way of living, their own way of teaching their children what's right and what's wrong.

In my very own opinion, I didn't know a thing about what it meant to Compete in a Global Economy or what it meant to exercise the Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens. Now that I know what they both mean, I think it's important for everyone to know. No matter what age.

take part in trying to get children to stay in school and off the streets

Rosemarie Gutierrez
Frank Gorden Learning Center
Mesa, Arizona

Literacy: reading and writing

I am going back to school for a better education and to learn how to read and write better. I cannot write too good. I would like to learn how. I want to get my high school diploma in order to get a better job. I would like to come back for more education and never stop learning.

Frances Long
Norwich Adult Education
Norwich, Connecticut

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Time of technology

In April of 1990 I received a head injury being put in a coma for a month and two weeks. I had to learn how to walk again and learn to use my mind again. A lot of what I know now is obsolete and does not measure up to today's technology. My will to learn has increased because of the head injury and because the inventory of knowledge has increased. A lot of people might argue how far literacy can go or how high it rates on a scale. I would say a lot, anything requires literacy and you need to learn and not give illiteracy a chance to sneak in on you. Because of this Technology explosion it has left a lot of people illiterate.

Nobody can say they know everything because of technologies ever growing rate. The more knowledge you gain, the more you become prepared for what the future brings us. I dropped out of school at 16 yrs. and now am 29 yrs. Like most others that have dropped out of school realizes how much of a mistake it was, because now they are behind in time of our Technology.

Even if you did graduate it does not stop you need to keep up with all the new Technology we have today. There are schools that teach you about what you need to know about today's Technology and keep what you need to know for today up to the degree it needs to be and keep your knowledge from getting cold. If you keep your literacy in tune and up to par you will not get lost in the world. Competition in the global community can run you over if you do not get the information required for today. You have nothing to lose in learning and will surely benefit from it today. If we all ask ourselves; what does the world expect of mankind today? You can almost guarantee a little more than yesterday and to learn what Technology is today. "Are you literate enough for today? and how can you be so sure?"

You need to learn and not give illiteracy a chance to sneak in on you

Kelly E. Brown
Black Hawk College
Moline, Illinois

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"What it Means to Exercise the Rights and Responsibilites of Citizenship . . ."

The rights and responsibilities of citizenship

It is good to live in a country where we have so many rights and responsibilities of citizenship. We have so many; however, I will share only a few with you to let you know how proud I am to be a citizen.

It feels good to be a black woman and to be able to vote and go anywhere I want to. There used to be a time when females could not vote and African Americans could not go places that they wanted to go. But thanks to Dr. Martin Luther King, former President Kennedy, our congressman and others, all citizens, regardless of color or sex, have equal rights.

The right and responsibility that I like and have taken advantage of is the right to get an education. There are so many people who either do not realize the value of an education or they just do not care. We are so lucky to be able to get an education, especially a high school education, because it is free. If you want to go to college and do not have any money to do so, assistance is available via state and federal grants/loans to pay for your education.

I quit school when I was in the ninth grade, the year nineteen seventy-nine to start my family. By nineteen ninety-one, I had four children and still had not gone back to school. Each year I would say, "Next year I am going back to school," but I never did until February of nineteen ninety-one when my oldest child, who was in the fifth grade at that time, came home with some math homework. As a parent it is my responsibility to help all my children with their homework, but I could not help her because I did not know how to do it myself. That was the worst feeling I ever had in my whole life. Words could not express how bad I felt. So, I told myself, "I am going back to school and get my high school diploma." The next day I went to PJC and enrolled in Adult Basic Education class. Guess what? May of nineteen ninety-two I got my GED and participated in the graduation ceremony. Now I am planning to go to college to attain an Associate of Science Degree in Legal Assistance through a state grant.

I would like to encourage all citizens of the United States to take advantage of all the rights and responsibilities of citizenship because you owe it to yourself. If you say to yourself "I will start doing so tomorrow," just make sure you start tomorrow. It is never too late. I guarantee you will be proud you did.

Shirley Ann Moye
Adult Basic Education Department
Pensacola Junior College
Pensacola, Florida

As a parent it is my responsibility to help all my children with their homework, but I could not help her because I did not know how to do it myself

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Literacy and citizenship

To me, being a good citizen means getting involved in your community and its political issues. That's where literacy come in. You see, in order to read about issues, newspaper updates, and campaign slogans for councilman, you must be able to have the knowledge of reading.

Filling out your tax papers requires reading also. Literacy in good citizenship involves voting and preparing a speech for your community. When you receive a letter for jury duty, you better hope you know what that piece of paper says, or else you'll be in a lot of trouble with the courts and the law.

Having the ability to read is the best piece of knowledge a person can have. Read and absorb all the information you can, and that way you'll know what is going on in the world.

As for being a parent, you would like to be able to read report cards, award certificates, and any other notices your child's school sends to you. Wouldn't it be nice if your children could learn how to read from you, and not only in school? I think that would be the best thing you could teach your child.

Just think about the many people who wish they knew how to read. Knowing how to read makes you a better citizen because it gives you the ability to get more involved with your world.

Knowing how to read makes you a better citizen because it gives you the ability to get more involved with your world

Anna Arlequin
May Dugan Center
Cleveland, Ohio

I'm thirty six years old. I would have to say I haven't been a very responsible citizen because I haven't voted for nearly fifteen years. This was my doing; I moved out of my district and never registered again.

I was young and felt I didn't need to vote. I felt who cares, I'm a nobody and who's going to listen to what I have to say. I knew since I didn't vote I didn't have the right to comment on the people who were in office and how things were being run.

I just learned that I just don't have the right to vote, but I also have the right to write to my congressmen and women. That I have the right to be heard.

I feel I need to be more informed I need to register and vote because my vote could make a difference.

I feel as a responsible person I need to teach my sons about their rights. I need to get them involved with what is going on around them. We listen to the news each night. That's not enough we also need to read the newspaper. We need to listen to what each of our congressmen are saying, and when we don't like what is going on we need to write and be heard.

Debra L. Pack
Let's Help Education
Topeka, Kansas

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My goal for the year 2000

Literacy is not a bird, it is not a plane, but it is a vehicle that will take us to the immense amount of information that will greatly improve our lives. It will supply us with information that will help us make intelligent decisions that will keep us up to date on our changing times. Literacy will help us participate and work with the community as a whole. It will enable us to read road maps, road signs, and bus schedules so that we can avoid delays and accidents. Literacy means being able to read medicine labels and the labels on packaged foods.

If you look in your dictionary, you will find the following definition for illiteracy: "The quality or condition of being unable to read and write." Illiteracy is a step backward in the walk toward the future. It is very possible that illiteracy will lead us to discontentment with life, although the inability to read is not a disgrace or a sign of low intelligence.

Illiteracy is a step backward in the walk toward the future

Many of the initial reasons for not being able to read or write maybe the fault of the family. During W.W.II, many countries outside of the United States were bombed and badly destroyed. There were no schools and many of the children were deprived of their education. Many of these children are today's illiterate adults. Many families move frequently to find a better life for themselves and their children. This can result in low attendance in school, and sometimes the children don't bother to go back to school. Frequent illnesses and infrequent attendance can cause an incomplete education. Many find it necessary to drop out of school to go to work to make money to help support the family.

It is well known that illiteracy is a major cause of poverty, unemployment, and crime. Tragic persons who can't read and write tend to lose hope. They see themselves only as failures and often become the victims of dishonest people.

The responsibilities of a person who lives in America are as follows: We should take care of our family first. We should see to it that they have enough food, education, health, etc. Second, we must work hard, live fast, die young, and be a good-looking corpse. We should participate in programs like "Neighborhood Watch". Every person should participate in recycling. All of our waste products need to be properly taken care of so that we can have a healthier environment. Everyone of us should not pollute the air we breathe or the water we drink, so that we can have a healthier and longer life to live. We should try to use solar energy so that we don't deplete this earth of our raw materials. A person with AIDS should take the responsibilities not to spread the disease to others. To do these responsibilities it is necessary to be able to read!

If people come to this country, they and their children should learn how to speak English, so that we can understand one another. Whenever possible, we should vote in city, county, state, and federal elections to assure our freedoms of Democracy!

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My literacy helps me to be able to write this paper. Being able to read makes me think twice and to continue my education! My goal for the year 2,000 and beyond is to learn the threads of the skills, so that I can be able to manage our investments and tax affairs.

Writing about literacy gives me the experience to know how hard it is to take part in a successful education. It enlightened my mind to question why so many students drop out of school. Why? Either they are lazy or they appear that they just don't care to be educated. No one will ever really know except the students themselves. Getting an education is hard work. It gives me heart burn and head aches, but the reward to continue one's education is great!

People that take responsibilities seriously read for their own destiny, to help others live better lives, to prevent crimes from happening, and to help our environment. These are America's future generations that will run America's tomorrow. Without their knowledge and expertise, we won't have America!

Being illiterate is like a blind person walking in circles-unable to reach his destination. By helping all of our illiterate people to get into education we can all live productive lives! This is not only a good idea, but also good for our wallet. It reduces our government spending and thus may reduce our income tax payment. The question is: "How can we help these people to come into school, so that they can get the education they need?" I hope that whenever possible I can help these people. We are a worthy cause!

A literate person can vote and select wisely the best candidate as governor or president

Rebecca Sheehan
Manatee Area Vocational
Technical Center
Brandenton, Florida

What it means to be literate

To me, being literate is a blessing from God. Because I can read, and write, I can be informed to what's happening in my community as well as in the World.

A literate person can vote and select wisely the best candidate as governor or president. Also a literate person can learn to pay income tax to help better education, hospitals, day care centers, senior citizen homes, parks, for our children and youth so they can have a place for recreation. That way they won't be so attracted to drugs and crime.

Our responsibility as parents is to help our children get a good education. Motivate them, so they can get as much knowledge as possible, therefore, their future will be stable. It's important so they can get good employment and contribute to the global economy.

Lydia E. Diaz
Conversational English at a
Governmental Agency
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico

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Adult learners' view of goal 6

Literacy is the ability to read, write and understand the written language. For each adult in the United States to be literate and functional within society by the year 2000, there must be some real educational changes. First of all, our outer lying areas, like in rural West Virginia, need to have easy access to educational facilities.

The majority of the facilities are in Charleston, the nearest big city, the adult learners in that area have access to all their educational needs. Yet in the rural areas, such as Blue Creek, Clendenin, etc. there are no vocational schools or colleges and very few A.B.E. classes. This puts adult learners at a disadvantage, most are low income and can't afford the travel expenses involved with going to school twenty or thirty miles away, that's just one way not full trip mileage either. So many adults aren't getting their educational needs met. These people are citizens of the United States of America, they are our fathers, mothers, brothers and our sisters. Shouldn't we assure everyone that needs an education, that they will receive an education?

Shouldn't we assure everyone that needs an education, that they will receive an education?

These adults are leaders in our community, they assume the rights and the responsibilities of citizenship, they decide to exercise their rights of freedom of choice and decide to further their educations. Adult learners are taking responsibility for their lives by furthering their education they increase their chances of obtaining higher paying jobs. Thus being self sufficient and able to support themselves and their families without government assistance.

If the education system would be expanded to the rural areas, plus advertise their willingness to teach adults, advertising in a positive way they could reach thousands of people who otherwise would have been unreachable before. These adults need vocational skills, a college education or specific job training to be able to survive in today's modern world.

Christina Rose
ABE/Jobs Program
Clendenin Community Center
Clendenin, West Virginia

For me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means; protecting, defending, upholding our rights through the government. (By participating, you become an active member in society). There would be no government without citizens. Taxes come from citizens that work. Citizenship means participation.

For me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means to get education, work and show my intelligence and abilities that I have.

Ivonne Morales
Educational Academy for Adults
Guayama, Puerto Rico

Citizenship

Literacy and good citizenship are connected because you need to be able to read and understand things to be a good citizen.

To be a good citizen you need to know what to do about the problems in the schools like the troubles with kids bringing weapons to schools. And teen pregnancies are also a problem. There are a lot more of them today than a few years ago.

Also you should be a good citizen in your own community by keeping watch for crime or any problems with gangs. You should also clean up the parks in the community for the children and help the elderly wiht their problems or needs. Also you could help others by volunteering at a community center for the homeless. In other words, to be a good citizen you need to be literate. That's so you can understand the reponsibilities of being a good citizen.

Tina Rivera
Adult Basic Education
Cleveland, Ohio

Citizenship is a privilege, be aware, do positive things. Don't sit by and not get involved

Citizenship is a privilege and with the privilege there are rights and responsibilities. People take for granted the opportunities that they have. We as citizens of the United States have a right to freedom. When a citizen becomes of age they should utilize the right they have to vote. Many people do not vote because they lack the understanding and knowledge of issues. Candidates need to address the public in a manner that can be understood by the majority.

Citizens need to be aware of the importance of voting. People hide behind the "My vote doesn't count" excuse. The public needs to be made aware that their vote does matter.

Citizens need to be productive and assist their community. People cannot turn the other cheek and not get involved. In order to have a productive and safe community we need to help.

Citizenship is a privilege, be aware, do positive things. Don't sit by and not get involved. Live and participate to ensure our youth the freedom to be happy and safe.

Andrea Fisher
Northside Independent School District
Community Education
San Antonio, Texas

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To be a responsible American citizen

Exercising your rights and responsibilities as Americans means, having them, knowing them, and respecting them.

I am an African American mother of four who is a law abiding citizen. I know I have rights; the Constitution tells me what they are.

My concern is about a generation who I feel doesn't realize that having these rights were not easy to come by. People had to fight and die for them. It is a responsibility for all Americans to respect each others' rights, and to teach those who don't know what their rights are.

There are a lot of people whose rights have been violated. When this happens it makes you feel like you are less than an American citizen. You begin to ask yourself, "What has my country done for me? Why am I being violated? How and when will I be treated as an equal?"

To respect each other's rights is a very important key job for this country. The word respect means: to regard; to relate to; to honor; to have consideration for. We as American citizens should look at this meaning and abide by its true feeling.

The country is in an uproar. Drugs and violence are at its peak. We as American citizens must come together as one. Don't put the responsibility on someone else. The problem is all of ours, from the upper class to the homeless.

We must start with our youth; they are our future leaders. We must teach them to respect themselves so they will in turn respect others. We need to bring our communities together and become one solid group. We must embrace our loved ones to let them know there is a shoulder to lean on when times are hard. We all must be strong for ourselves as well as for others.

I have struggled all my life; I know I was dealt a bad hand from the beginning. I have learned from my pain to become strong. I have not yet reached the mountain that I want to climb. I know I will and when I do my family and my country must be behind me in order for me to reach the top.

Nadine C. Hodges
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Exercising your rights and responsibilities as Americans means, having them, knowing them, and respecting them

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Citizenship and residency status

As a resident you don't have as many rights as a citizen does. As a citizen, you have rights to vote for the President of the United States, the Congress, the State's leaders and the Mayors. You have the right to participate in politics. You are allowed to protest against everything that you think is wrong. You may not change the way things are, but at least you can express your disapproval and opinions.

As a citizen, you also have some advantages that a resident doesn't have. For example, when you are abroad, you are protected by U.S. Government and when you go to some countries, you don't have to get a VISA and pay fees.

The disadvantage about being a U.S. citizen is when it's necessary to enlist in the U.S. Army. People all over the world hate war. They also hate to be invaded by other countries which have more power. We like to live a peaceful condition.

American citizens must be born in the U.S. Also, a permanent resident can become a U.S. citizen through naturalization process. If a permanent resident committed a crime or violated the law, he may not be able to become a U.S. citizen. So, it's better to have a clean record.

In order to become a U.S. citizen you have to know U.S. history and government structure.

If I become a U.S. citizen, I will help my fellow immigrants and try to be a good citizen. I would obey the law, pay attention to the community, get actively involved in politics and social activities. I would also volunteer to work for people who need help and do my best for the whole society. Thus, becoming a U.S. citizen is essential to be able to participate in political and social issues.

As a citizen you have rights. . . . You may not change the way things are, but at least you can express your disapproval and opinions

Jinghua Yang
Alameda County Library
Adult Literacy Program
Freemont, California

Personal responsibilities

It is important to be true to one's values. In a free society we can develop ourselves as complete individuals. A good citizen is responsible for: developing his or her potential as a human being with dignity and worth, upholding the basic American belief in equality and justice for every one, regardless of their race, sex, creed, or religion, and thinking, feeling, and acting honestly and fairly. This is why everyone should plan for his or her own education, health, leisure, and personal beliefs. These are the responsibilities important to me.

Luis Alicea
North Hampton Community College
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

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You have to be able to make a difference

To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, you have to be able to make a difference. There are many ways I can exercise that right. I use to have the attitude that my vote wouldn't make a difference. I felt that the person I voted for wouldn't win.

I have been reading different articles about the city I live in, and it's sad to see how it is deteriorating with the crime, violence, and neglect from city and state government workers who are suppose to be here not only for the city but for the state as a whole. I'm not looking to blame, so I ask myself what role do I play. If everyone had the attitude I did about voting, then whatever happens, they would have no say because they didn't vote.

I realize that my vote is my voice in my community. As a citizen, it is my responsibility to exercise that right. I have changed my attitude about voting. I understand that I can make a difference in my community by getting involved in what is happening. I can participate in the neighborhood block watch. I can volunteer in the school systems, serve lunches or help out in the classrooms. I can escort children from school. These are ways that I can exercise my rights.

My voice is heard through my vote, and my vote does make a difference

Another way is helping the less fortunate than myself in the homeless shelter by donating old clothes or canned goods to the food kitchens. I feel this is a responsibility I need to exercise because I know what it's like to be without a home or a job, to need assistance, to not be able to qualify for different programs, or to miss the deadline to sign up.

It's also important that I don't abuse the programs that are available because if I don't abuse the program, it gives someone who really needs it the opportunity to use it. I can also get involved with focusing on our teens and young adults. Parents can get together and organize or come up with ideas and views for different programs. These programs would give our young adults and teens hope for the future and a better way of life. This gives them the opportunities to work, further their education, and do much more. It gives them structure. For example, they learn discipline, to accept constructive criticism, how to motivate themselves and to accept responsibility. This will also help them off the streets.

I realize that I can offer a lot to my community by taking on some of the responsibilities in and around it. I've experienced a lot through the years and I should let my voice be heard. My voice is heard through my vote, and my vote does make a difference. As a citizen, I have the right to vote. It is my responsibility to exercise that right.

Deborah Johnson
Urban League of Greater Hartford
Hartford, Connecticut

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My citizenship

I came to this country eighteen years ago, eager for freedom and a better life

What does it mean to be a citizen? To me, to be a citizen of this great country means you have rights and responsibilities.

I grew up in a beautiful rural village where everyone worked from sunup to sunset in order to have enough food. When I had to quit school at age twelve, I cried and thought "What am I going to do now, just stay home and do the ironing?" We didn't even have any books to read. My dreams were dead.

Where I grew up I never voted because women were not encouraged to vote. As a matter of fact, we seldom heard the word "citizen." During elections, the words "patriotic citizen" were written everywhere, but after the election those two wonderful words were replaced by the word "countryman." I came to this country eighteen years ago, eager for freedom and a better life. Years went by and with the help of the county library R.E.A.D. program and a good citizen neighbor, I learned basic English. Then I dreamed of becoming an American citizen. I studied very hard learning United States government and history. In May of 1991, my dream came true: I became an American citizen and I'm very proud of that.

When I became a citizen I was fully aware of my rights: freedom of speech, the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, and the freedom of religion. Being able to vote and knowing that my vote counts, and being able to speak out without being thrown into jail means the world to me.

As a citizen, I have responsibilities to be loyal to my country, to my state, and to my community, and to respect other people's rights.

At this point in my life, my responsibilities as a citizen are close to home. As a parent, everyday I guide my children in every way I can. I want them to do well in school and be happy. I want them to have a better education and better future than the one I had before I came to this country. I encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities that this country gives to its citizens instead of taking those opportunities for granted. And I want them to grow up to be responsible citizens in their community.

I also spend some time each week helping my community. I volunteer at the school helping other children and I attend school meetings. In our neighborhood we help each other with many things and someday soon I will be ready to help an adult learn to read.

Most of my dreams have come true! Some I am still working on: to finish high school, to go to college and to continue my volunteer work, especially in school. I want my revived dreams to encourage citizenship in the children.

Tila Trestrail
County Library READ Program
Happy Camp, California

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To me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means . . .

Exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means: to be able to do something good not just for me and my family, but for my country too and on the other hand it means also to have the security of being helped if I need to; because it will be somebody ready to do something for me if I just choose the right people to be in charge of my country when I use my vote.

Sanjuana S. Spurlock
John Jay High School
San Antonio, Texas

citizenship means: to be able to do something good not just for me and my family, but for my country too

When I was 16 years old, I never took life or education seriously. I was already engaged and when I turned 17 years old I got married. I thought to myself, well, now I'm married and my husband will always be here for me.

A year and a half later I had my son. Another year I had my daughter. I sometimes felt 50 years old instead of 20 years old. I wanted to be more than just a housewife and a mother. I wanted a career.

My marriage was not what I thought. It was shaky and I became very concerned about my future. I had no experience of anything and never finished high school.

When both my kids were in 1st and 2nd grade, I took the opportunity of going to school for my diploma and also training. I didn't get my diploma but I did get a certificate in job training. I worked for a while but I still wasn't too satisfied. I wanted more I was confused. Eight years later I had my last child.

When my last child was 1 year old, I was already divorced. I struggled very hard with my 3 children. I had no transportation, no baby-sitter and had to stay home and raise my 3rd child. By the time she was in school, I went to work. But I still wasn't too satisfied.

I am now at Westside Employment Center to develop my skills in reading, writing, math, social studies and science in order to get my diploma. This will help me to get a better job, make me more secure in my life, and work for the things I've always wanted to do to live a better life.

I may not be a successful person by being a doctor or a judge but being a citizen I have the right and responsibility to vote, being independent, and having the privilege and rights of being treated equally.

I can proudly say that my first child has already graduated from high school and has joined the army reserve. My second child will be graduating this year and is planning to go to college to become a reporter. My 3rd child is in 5th grade and we're looking forward to her future.

Adelaida Torres
Westside Employment Center
Chicago, Illinois

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The rights and responsibilities of citizenship

Could you imagine that somebody or something that you don't know at all has control over your life? The X thinks for you, makes a decision for you, does something for you and you don't know anything on the X. How could it be possible if you are not a baby or an idiot? it seems to me that not to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship is the same as leaving my life to the X.

Then how can I exercise the rights of citizenship? The most important way to exercise them is to vote properly, I think I cannot make policies and execute them myself. But I can express my opinion and make policy-makers to consider it through voting. It is not only the right but also the responsibility of citizenship to vote properly. And to do so I should have an interest in current issues, for example, gun control, abortion, homo-sexual rights, etc. I should know about the policy-makers' ideas on them and think over them myself.

Doug L. Han
Durham Technical
Community College
Durham, North Carolina

It is not only the right but also the responsibility of citizenship to vote properly

To me exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship of being a good parent means teaching my child the rights he has as being a citizen. Just as in showing and telling him he has freedom of speech the right to vote so as me being his mom I still have a chance to teach him his rights and responsibilities when he gets older. So when the future heads towards us he would already know what to expect.

My responsibilities as being a mom is hard at times but it's easy at times too. I just want my child to know that he will always have a mom to look up to. I want to be a good role model for my son just show him that we can make it without any one standing in our way. Because he is all I got and I am all he's got. And I know were going to make it together.

Shonell Madden
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
Gulfport, Mississippi

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The rights and responsibilities of citizenship

Being born in the U.S. a person has the right and responsibility to learn as much as you can about our country. Things to be learned should include our constitution, the laws governing our nation, our presidents, and what they stand for.

I think as a citizen you have the responsibility to serve your country like enlisting in the military, getting out and doing something for your community such as keeping your streets clean, picking up trash when you see it, and calling the police when you see something wrong. When you do something for your community you feel good about yourself and when you feel good about yourself it will carry on to your other jobs. The biggest thing is to get out and VOTE. If you don't vote you don't have the right to complain about the way things are run.

Being a good citizen means being a good neighbor, talking to them to see if they are ok, and helping your older neighbors out when there is a lot of snow at the end of the driveway. Paying your bills on time and being a good role model in your community is desirable. When people see you doing a good job they look up to you and they try to do a good job like you. Give feedback to your officials. That way they know what they can do for you, they know how to better themselves, and how to better serve their constituents. If you don't like the way your officials are doing their jobs, run for offices yourself. Get involved in your community, be a good person, and get out and vote.

Get involved in your community, be a good person, and get out and vote

What do you need to know to be a good citizen? How do you vote, where do you vote, and how do you register to vote? Be informed on the issues. What are the issues facing your community and states? Be literate and educated so you understand the issues. Learn the history and background of your locality. What are the needs of your community? Most of all know who your candidates are and what they stand for.

Dan Hamilton
LVA-Chippewa Valley
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

In order to vote correctly, you have to be literate. For the first time, in November, I could actually read what to vote for. Once before I tried, and ended up punching anything. Now I can prepare to vote by reading local papers. They've got a sample ballot. you can read both sides of an issue, and read the resumes of politicians. You can do your own research and not depend on someone else.

William Taylor
Literacy Volunteers of America
Kalispell, Montana

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My dream fulfilled

I Michael Khazak, age 57, came from Russia 5 years ago. I will be getting my citizenship this summer. In order to become a good citizen I feel I must further understand American society, economic system and culture, which I find interesting.

I want to understand American life, American families, and the American school system because my children are learning in schools and colleges here.

We lived in a Communist society. We didn't know democratic values, and now we must study how to use these democratic values in our lives. The many rights of an American citizen such as thinking as I please, speaking, and writing as I please, choosing my work as I please are very important for me because I did not have these rights in Russia.

Its very important to me that my daughters and son, have the opportunity to choose the schools and universitites that they want. In Russia they couldn't choose. My old dream will be fulfilled when I become a citizen of America.

Michael Khazak
King Phillip Middle School
West Hartford, Connecticut

It is our right as citizens to vote, we need to practice our rights. You can make a difference in what happens in our government

To me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means: To get involved in your community by participating in crime watch. Also participate on your school PTA. Inform yourself about what's going on in your government. Find out all the issues that are being discussed. Inform yourself about world affairs. All this information can be shared with your children so that you can better prepare them for adulthood. More important register to vote and vote. It is our right as citizens to vote, we need to practice our rights. You can make a difference in what happens in our government. We are very fortunate that we live in a democracy. It is a privilege and an honor to vote. Encourage your adult children to vote. Also, your relatives and friends. It is our right, so let's not abuse it.

Martina Portillo
John Jay High School
San Antonio, Texas

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Voices of Adults on Welfare . . .

Literacy

What is literacy I was asked. By looking the definition up in our Webster it is not even close to what the real meaning is for us, nor the true deep desire one feels who was once illiterate and worked hard to be literate.

If reading and writing was all I knew today, I would have really cheated myself as well as my two daughters out of the opportunities we derive. I am a 34 year old divorced mother. I did stay in school and get my high school diploma but that was nearly 16 years ago. Today, I can't remember my general math skills, social studies, judicial system, reading and comprehending skills, my writing skills are again poor.

Can an individual truly understand what to be literate today actually means! For myself it is so embarrassing to admit to some I don't remember how to do what for some is an easy task, the overwhelming low self esteem, the feeling of not being in a more educated league is very depressing at times.

As with many Americans, the full concept of what being a literate citizen is not just knowing how to read and write to be able to survive in our nation, understanding our rights, being able to understand our laws as well obeying the laws, paying taxes, exercising our voting rights, standing up for our rights as citizens, understanding what privileges we all have is a wonderful freedom.

With many of us today our children keep our will to work towards literacy. Children think parents know everything, but this is not true. The look of disbelief in their eyes when they realize their parent doesn't know the answer to their question hurts. We all want to help ourselves, but for me not being able to help my children is a feeling of helplessness and a feeling I've let my daughters down.

The look of disbelief in their eyes when they realize their parent doesn't know the answer to their question hurts

For myself I am one of many that is on the Welfare System, one could never begin to imagine how we are treated by our community! I don't want to be on Welfare, I want to improve my skills so I can get a job as well keep that job for a better future for my two daughters and myself.

My prayer to our community, our congress men and women, and our government would be: Please don't cut the budget for us not to be able to reach our goals! Help us so we can be the citizens we truly dream to be.

Robin Keithley
Let's Help Education
Topeka, Kansas

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My name is Jennifer M. Walker. I have one child who is four years old. Her name is Mallaurie Rhae. I have been married three months. My husband's name is Terrell Walker. He is an A.C. Technician.

I am 20 years old now and have been on the Welfare System for approximately 18 months off and on.

I participate in an adult education program by the name of WIN. WIN has given me the opportunity to always have someone to talk to. But most importantly, WIN has given me courage and helped me refresh my clerical skills to get a job that will help support my family and get off the Welfare system hopefully for good.

WIN provides a lot of support while you attend. WIN allowed parents to bring their children and provided day care for them. My attending, along with my daughter showed her that no matter how old you are, school is very important. She now loves going to the library and is also trying to read.

I now am working full-time in a clerical position with Head Start. Although I do not get to attend WIN classes as often as I would like to, I see many Head Start parents attending daily while their children are in school. Those parents are looking much happier with themselves and are learning that they can make a difference in their lives as well as in their community.

Jennifer Walker
Workforce Instructional Network
San Marcos, Texas

But today you can't depend upon what you can do well. All employers want to know if you have a GED or High School diploma

To me having the skills and knowledge to compete in the economy means that you have to get your education. Therefore; without knowing how to read or write you would be in a bad situation. And if you can't read there's another option. If you're skilled for a certain job maybe you've got something going for you.

But today you can't depend upon what you can do well. All employers want to know if you have a GED or High School diploma. So now that I have the opportunity to go to school free of charge, I am going to get all the education that I can. So that I can come off of welfare and provide a better life for my children and myself.

When I complete my GED I will try with all my strength to get any job I can to better my family's life. We will probably have to walk because I don't own a car, but believe me we will overcome all of our obstacles that gets in the way down this rocky road that I will travel. But all in all I'm going to win because this is my long life goal.

Tommie Gala Dula
Caldwell Community College
Hudson, North Carolina

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High school, GED, and beyond

High school was not important to me at the time. I did not realize how important an education was. I think all high school students should be required to go to a factory and work at least 2 days, 8 hours each day so they would realize that is not where they want to spend most of there life. Schools should not put kids in classes for slow learners just to push them through the system. I was push through the system and in the 12th grade did not know my times tables I did not graduate because of a failed math exam.

Now I'm 28, single with a 14 month old child. I realize he is depending on me. So I have to be responsible now. Parents should stress high school and college. They should speak about college as if you just automatically go. Everyone does. It's expected. The law should be changed to where you can not drop out of school. And if truancy is a problem, build reform schools for the people who refuse to go to high school.

Schools should not put kids in classes for slow learners just to push them through the system

As for adult education—We should be trained to use the computers completely not just turn it on and use one program. There needs to be more teachers, teachers like the class I'm in. In 3 weeks I've learned more than in the past 4 months in math. I've only started this class 3 weeks ago and today am taking my final GED test. And going to start college. The teachers give me support and don't mind me asking questions over and over until I get it. And it's a structured class so they help you find where to start working. What you need to work on and not waste time.

For people on welfare, like myself, I think it should be mandatory to get your GED and take some sort of training. And have a time limit set on the GED. So people don't abuse the system. People on welfare who try to get off it should get some sort of extra benefits and people who just like living off the government should get money for there child and food and have a social worker distribute it to them so they have no money to spend on themselves. This would at least help get people to do something for themselves.

Cherri Moss
Caldwell Community College
Hudson, North Carolina

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What literacy means to me

I am a mother of eight children. I had my first child at age fifteen. I got pregnant with my first child at the age of fourteen. I'm saying this to let you know that education and economics work like hand and glove. If we as a people would put more in education we would have an educated people. Take my oldest son, in and out of jail, with a twelfth grade education. I tried to let him know that he needed more education but he rejected me. "Why?" I asked him. He then replied, "You didn't finish high school yourself." I put on my thinking, he was right. I was waiting for James and Darrious to get in school. I got off of it, got busy, went to Mitchell Head Start Center to register my boys. I had problems that day. The shot records were out of date and the boys needed skin tests. My boys and I walked from the Grave Manor Projects to Benson Clinic to Mitchell Head Start Center at least three days in a row. I was introduced to Mrs. Caroline Mitchell, the coordinator. She told me about the Memphis Literacy Council Head Start Read It Again Program and asked me if I wanted to participate in the program. It has made a change in my children's lives as well as mine. Because of the help I was able to receive in the Head Start Read It Again Program, I was able to pass it on. I learned to encourage my children. Do you know what it means to me when my son calls me to say, "Some business men are coming to school to see my work." He told me that they were prepared to offer him $10.00 an hour and on the job training.

James, age five, at Westwood Elementary is having problems, but this is where my skills can come in and I can help. I can read to them and ask them questions about the story. Also, my five and four year old boys are reading to me. The Head Start Read It Again Program has planted a seed of knowledge.

Education and economics work like hand and glove. If we as a people would put more in education we would have an educated people

Bobbie Keefer
Memphis Literacy Council
Memphis, Tennessee

The reason I feel that an adult should learn to read and write is because in life everything is real, this is not a dream. Adults need to wake up and face the world, because everybody is not considered a friend. And when it comes to business adults are suppose to handle their own business, but If you can't read or write who will? As you've grown up you probably will have kids, when the time comes for medicine, reading books, telling stories, who's going to do it, if you can't read or write? You have to be there for them. I am only 19 years old, but for the younger ladies of the 90's, I want to say to you please stay in school. Learn what you're supposed to, and if you have the skills please use them also.

Tonia Wilson
Alabama Council on Human Relations
and Family Service Center
Auburn, Alabama

I am a productive member of society

In order to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship you have to be able to know what your rights and responsibilities are.

I am a productive member of society. I want to be so much more. My dream is to be a writer. I had some of my work published and I am now working on a book. I am optimistic about my future. I know my strengths and can calmly standby my decisions once I have made them.

My life has content and meaning because I stand for something...and that something is pride in self-worth. I know that many people get pulled down by our government system on welfare. But by getting some kind of education many people can better their lives and their children's lives as well. I believe that our government needs improvement and I try my best by reading about current issues and being aware of my local, as well as national legislators, senators, etc.

The government seems to be cutting back on programs that are essential to many adults and children that provide basic needs. I think that in order for many people to exercise their rights and responsibilities, they have to first have their basic needs taken care of. I know how hard it can be to get by. Three years ago, I was homeless with a two month old baby and a 2 year old. I left my boyfriend after years of terrifying mental, physical and emotional abuse. I had no where to live but a Women's Shelter in a nearby town. It was the lowest time of my life. Now those years are behind me. I now live in a low-income apartment and after almost two years on Welfare, I now have a full-time job. I completed a year at college. I quit going so I could get off the welfare-pull. I volunteer spare time to various social services and attend an Adult Educational program in the evenings.

Who knows... maybe my name one day will be found on a ballot card. Ex-welfare mother turned governor-elect.

Maybe even in the year 2000!!!

Who knows... maybe my name one day will be found on a ballot card. Ex-welfare mother turned governor-elect

Lorrie Grogg
Workforce Instructional Network
San Marcos, Texas

The rights and responsibilities of a welfare mother

I am writing this letter to express my concern on the rights and responsibilities of a welfare mother.

I am concerned of the time limit on the 2 year work program because many reasons need to be thought out first before this law becomes in effect. One is I myself am a student at Greenlee Adult Learning Source and I have been going to school for two years now to get my G.E.D. and I am going on the third year now of getting my G.E.D. and in between the years that I have been going so many things have occurred. I am a mother of 3 and the kids have been sick with tonsillitis during that time and they have missed so much in the process and I also have had to. And also I quit school at a early age, 6th grade, so I had a lot of learning to do. And a lot of welfare mothers are in the same circumstances that I am.

Also when I finish my G.E.D. I want to go to college but I would not be able to do all of this if I did not have the time needed to achieve all of this and get off of welfare for good and be able to move up in life and in the workforce. So I will not have to go back on welfare. And that chance is college and a job with good pay and benefits. And not all can achieve at the same speed as others.

So 2 years would not be enough for all and would not give people enough time to be finally independent. Without the time needed in college to achieve which sometimes in most cases takes more than 2 years depending on the person. Most people will not be able to get a good paying job with benefits and have a chance to make it without being dependent on welfare. And in the long run the system will never be able to become stable. People will be going on back on welfare because they don't have the skills they need to achieve and that is the only way that people will become independent is schooling and a college education.

The idea is good to get people working but the ways need to be thought out and I think education is the only way.

The idea is good to get people working but the ways need to be thought out and I think education is the only way

Teresa Agee
Greenlee Metro Lab School
Family Resource Center
Denver, Colorado

Voices of Adults in Prison and Treatment Centers

Literacy

I feel that literacy expands far beyond just being able to read and write. My definition of literacy is having a great deal of common sense. Because without common sense one could be called stupid, illiterate or many other negative things.

Literacy is the beginning to living a positive and productive life. Without literacy the chances of one making it in life successfully is slim to none, but on the other hand literacy doesn't promise anyone a promising and rewarding future. That is when common sense comes in to be able to make the right decisions through your Journey in life.

Literacy is something that I feel is taken for granted by many people and later in their life they regret that they didn't take advantage of the opportunity to learn academically and some return to school to enhance their education, so in other words I am saying that it is never to late to learn.

M. Roberts
California State Prison
Corcoran, California

Literacy is the beginning to living a positive and productive life. Without literacy the chances of one making it in life successfully is slim to none

Our opinion is that our government should facilitate the ways so kids and adults have the opportunity to attend school. If it's possible to help those with less preparation to reach the university level with grants and facilitating the educational access. One of the best ways to motivate young people to learn, is to build more public libraries and instituting cultural programs on television. We also must keep in mind those people that are not interested in learning in school. We should make a system for those to learn an art so they may be utilized in our society. It is also required to teach a respect of the different cultures in order to truly take advantage of a global economy.

The United States is a country of immigrants and we have to start accepting each other and work together on the capacity of our education. It is rich in languages and it would be very convenient for us to take advantage of it. But to reach this goal the government needs to take away all the obstacles like: wanting to deport all illegal students, for the teacher to stop discriminating against the students from minority groups, and to dedicate more time for those who can't speak the language of this country. Because even they want to be useful in this society. But without giving them the help they need they end up being a plague for society.

Tavera Ferney*
California State Prison
Corcoran, California

* This essay was written in Spanish and translated into English by the instructor.

Overcoming illiteracy

I think that in order to arrive at this goal of participating in the economy of this country it would be necessary to first learn to read and write and then have the proper basic education to overcome illiteracy. Only then can we start to participate in the economy of our country. We can also have a better life and begin to understand our basic human rights. In this country we, as Latinos, are belittled as humans, first, because we are not from here and second because of the language barrier. If we could all read and write English I don't believe the discrimination would be as much. They would respect us more. The Hispanic people, as a whole, have suffered much humiliations. For not being educated it always receives the worse deals, and is employed in the most menial jobs, I don't believe it is just that we cannot have the same rights as an American citizen, I believe that if we all had an even level of education we would have a better life.

I believe that if we all had an even level of education we would have a better life

In order not to have illiteracy, the government should allocate more federal funds and more social services. We also need more adult schools. We should not put so much pressure on the poor and disadvantaged. Many of us in these categories are aliens. In the U.S. there exists much racial discrimination towards someone who is not from this country. Many of us come to this country in order to progress and have a better economic life but we find ourselves in the midst of much inequality and they don't give us the jobs that we need to live better but rather they appease us with the most menial jobs and pay us a pittance. In order to overcome these barriers we must be better educated.

Jose Vasquez*
California State Prison
Corcoran, California

My life as a responsible citizen doesn't stop because I am in prison. I can set examples for doing the things I didn't get and did on the street. Like getting my high school G.E.D. so I can show that prison don't stop anyone from getting educated and understanding of life values.

C. Bradford
California State Prison
Corcoran, California

* This essay was written in Spanish and translated into English by the instructor.

In my opinion . . .

Well, in my opinion what each person should know about his rights in order to compete in a global economy and to utilize our rights and responsibilities as citizens is:

The person should know how to read and write English, and be well educated in order to know what he's doing and be a good citizen or resident of this country. He should know the rules and regulations that this government employs in order to see where one stands in the overall plan. Without these requisites we cannot reach the aforementioned goal we are striving to attain. The responsibilities of a citizen are very delicate because if a person transgresses the law of the land, everything that has been obtained, is immediately lost.

In order to compete in a global economy we have to have a good education and be in good standing with society. It's like they say, we have to have something to respond with, we have to have the knowledge and intelligence in order to discuss and respond to the delicate problems we are faced with as it affects our rights as citizens. Another point that we've been discussing is, how to arise from the state of being an undocumented illegal alien and stop the ignorance. From another point of view, there are other people that are opposed to us living here in this country. They frequently attack us through their legislation. These are the republicans, who are saying that it is very easy for us to come to this country, that everything comes easy to us, that we come here to eat for free. That is not the case. Everyone that works pays taxes. I don't know with what purpose they ask us prisoners our opinions but I hope that our voice will be heard and that our opinions will be respected within the context of the questions we are trying to address. It is a good goal and how we reach that goal depends on the government. We need to see the government take action, not just receive opinions. If these opinions will help to determine or answer questions which in the final analysis will help us as undocumented aliens receive funds to open up schools and new jobs then it is good.

One thing that I would propose would be that if a person studies here for six years, that person should be allowed to be a legal resident or even later a citizen. They should teach everyone the rights and responsibilities of citizens and how to obtain citizenship. This would give everyone a different train of thought about themselves and their environment, and they would also do their part to receive merit.

I hope that our voices will be heard now that we are being asked our public opinions. All of us who are undocumented aliens here are the ones who are doing studies in ESL and we hope that by the year 2000 we will know how to read and write and have the knowledge to function in the economic system of this country.

Many times I ask myself, why should we strengthen ourselves by studying, if this country has no plan for documentation or for us to obtain our citizenship or residency in this country. I repeat again, the majority of the people studying ESL are from other countries therefore, there should be a course of

I hope that our voices will be heard now that we are being asked our public opinions . . . and we hope that by the year 2000 we will know how to read and write

studies where upon completion you receive residence in this country. We need an incentive on the part of the government of this country. Let's suppose a person comes to this country with intentions of learning, becoming educated and eventually going into a profession but he is denied citizenship and the doors of opportunity are kept closed to him, he eventually becomes frustrated because he can not realize his dreams, in the end he is left washing dishes or some other menial job just because he could not obtain his citizenship.

R. Melendez*
California State Prison
Corcoran, California

My name is Barbara Ann Johnson. I am thirty-six years old. I cannot spell. And I am not good at all at math. I went to the eleven grade. I can read and write but not well. I am very embarrassed about my spelling. I don't write home much. My embarrassment is what allowed the system to pass me along. I am not a stupid woman. I just don't have the education other people have. People have said that they thought that I had a high school education because of my confidence when I speak. I know how to draw very good. I would love to get a proper education so I can have a career in art some day.

I am intelligent enough to know not to let my embarrassment stop me from getting the education I and my children deserve

I am trying to write this because it is my homework and it is important to me and it feels good to do it. With the help of a dictionary and a wonderful friend that has helped me feel less embarrassed. Our teacher has a way of showing us that even with all of our lack of confidence we can do it if we try. She is one of the very few teachers in my life who really cares. This is hard but rewarding to me.

When I leave here I would like to find a job instead of being on welfare. I need to be taught how to read and write better so when I get out so I can apply for a job. I need to know math so I know no one will cheat me. I need to know how to spell to write at anytime I want to.

I have a beautiful seven year old at home and two wonderful grandchildren from my twenty-one year old. They are wonderful children. I am very proud of them, and I want them to be proud of me. I am intelligent enough to know not to let my embarrassment stop me from getting the education I and my children deserve.

Barbara Johnson
Western Adult Abuse Treatment Unit
Newtown, Connecticut

* This essay was written in Spanish and translated into English by the instructor.

Helping people once they're out

My name is Rita Martin. I am 32 years old. I have been incarcerated for 8 years, and have had all my rights took from me. I have been out two years now, and found it hard for me to get a job because of my incarceration.

The Government must do more training and educating by the year of two thousand. If every adult American must be literate, and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete, the attitude of people hiring must be changed in order for those people that have been incarcerated who have done wrong, and paid the debt. On-the-job training must be considered a second chance without any discrimination of past faults.

The State must also help by having assistance locally here in Winchester, KY 40391. On applications they ask if you have ever been convicted and almost always putting the applicant in jeopardy of being the last one being hired.

Rita Martin
Winchester/Clark County
Literacy Council
Winchester, Kentucky

I quit school in 12th grade and that was my biggest mistake I ever made

Rights and Responsibilites

I, Mayfer Ballew, I quit school in 12th grade and that was my biggest mistake I ever made. Because when I dropped out of school I started having kids and I got on welfare. Then I started getting high and just not doing anything. At that time I was not into rights and responsibilities.

So now I am 36, and I feel like it is my responsibility to get my G.E.D. So I could be one, a better person in society and two, a more responsible mother. I could help my community more too, and I could get a better job.

So with my education I will be a better person. And I hope to help my kids with there education and there rights and responsibilities in life.

Mayfer Ballew
Western Substance Abuse Unit
Newtown, Connecticut

I want a fair chance at life

I, Tina Appell, am writing about my life in Bristol, CT. I grew up in Bristol and spent most of my life living in a project on Union St. While growing up, I really didn't have a fair chance in school as well as life. Maybe it's because my mother moved all over Bristol. I remember one school called Bingham School that just didn't care about my sister and I. They really didn't care about our education as long as they got paid for being there. I only learned third grade work up until I was in 9th grade. So I had quit school only because I never got anywhere in school. They just moved me right along with the other kids. I never learned science, history, geography or social studies cause they never gave me a chance in school. So I gave up and quit. Now that I'm thirty I am willing to try to get a G.E.D. I know it's gonna be hard for me cause I can't spell that great. But I'm willing to try.

I had worked in Bristol at Lee Springs and I loved my job there. But I had to quit because I had no one to look after my children while working at the plant. So then I had to get on welfare to take care of my children, which I didn't like. When I was 21 years old I had lost my children because of the environment that I lived in, which was drugs, so I never had the responsibilities to take care of them as well as myself I really didn't have the skills to be a mother. So I lost everything I had and loved. So then I got more and more into drugs which brought me to jail.

what I want today is to start over again in life as well as school

Now I could say that I'm clean today for the first time since I was 7 years old. I've been in jail for 22 months now, and I want a fair chance at life. I do want my life back and want to at least see my children to let them know that it wasn't my fault cause of the way that I was raised. What I want today is to start over again in life as well as school. I'm not saying that I'm not in school now, because I am. I just need the time to understand more about responsibilities to be a mother as well as more about my education to make my life much better. I look for help because I would love to read a book and spell words, and I try my best to learn. But my spelling isn't that great cause I spell different then others, and I get mad at myself cause I can't read a good book. Maybe that's why my life was sad cause I never had a fair chance in life. So now I'm just doing my best to get by and I'm trying to keep up the good work.

Tina Appell
Western Substance Abuse Unit
Newtown, Connecticut

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Appendix

Project Process and Methodology

How We Came to Hear the Voices of Adult Learners:

A Brief History of the Project Process and Methodology

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) and the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) launched this joint initiative in order to fulfill our Congressional mandate to measure state and national progress toward Goal 6. The project was conceived at a time when the National Adult Student Congress was actively seeking ways to involve adult literacy students in shaping policy and priorities for the educational system they depend on to meet their needs. Since the purpose of our project was to arrive at a definition of Goal 6 that would be specific enough to serve as a guide for educational practice, we felt it was important to start with adult learners' own perceptions of what they needed to know to fulfill the purposes of this Goal in their lives.

Both the Institute and the Goals Panel were also interested in using the project to build public awareness of the National Education Goals and to stimulate discussion of what we need to do to meet them. After discussions with representatives of the Student Congress and the National Coalition for Literacy, we decided the project could best serve both these purposes if we involved adult literacy practitioners, encouraging them to devote class time to discussion of the Goal as a prelude to adult student writing. To assist in this process, we contracted with Literacy South, a training and technical assistance organization with experience in the area of student writing and student publications, to develop a set of Guidelines for teachers and tutors to use. These Guidelines included an overview of the project, sample lessons, a brief bibliography, and a copy of a release form to be submitted by every student who participated. Most important, the Guidelines provided a set of stem sentences to make clear the questions we wanted adults to address:

- *In my community, competing in the global economy means . . .*
- *To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means . . .*
- *To me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means . . .*
- *To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship you have to be able to . . .*[1]

Once the Guidelines were ready to be distributed, we worked with the member organizations of the National Coalition for Literacy to prepare outreach materials for their networks. Organizations that actively participated in getting materials to their members included: the Association for Community Based Education (ACBE), Laubach Literacy Action (LLA), Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA), the National Association of State Directors of Adult Education, the State Literacy Resource Centers, the Student Coalition for Adult Literacy Education (SCALE), and United Way of America's Literacy Initiative. Altogether, the Institute sent out approximately 6,000 copies of the Guidelines with an "Open Letter to

[1] See attached copy of "Open Letter" and *Guidelines*.

Adult Learners, their Teachers, Tutors and Program Directors" inviting participation and setting a deadline of March 4, 1994 for receipt of student writings.

By the end of March we had received more than 1500 responses from 149 adult literacy programs in 34 states and Puerto Rico. Since participation was wholly self-generated in response to the process described above, we can make no claims about how representative the writings we received are of the entire range of adult learners. We don't know why programs chose to participate or not to participate. We made no effort to control the number of responses from any one program. Some sent two or three. Some sent dozens of responses. We read them all. We believe the writings are a significant collection and that they reflect the diversity of adult literacy programs and adult learners. We have appended, with gratitude, a list of all programs that participated.[2]

As the responses began to come in, NIFL staff filed them in folders according to program and geographic region. Each folder was assigned a code number, and every learner response within that folder also was assigned an individual number to enable us to keep track of each response. The material in each folder was then read by a text scanner and saved to a computer disc to facilitate management and analysis of the data.

At this point, the Institute enlisted technical support from the Graduate School of Education and Human Resources at The George Washington University to help us develop and implement a process for analyzing the data. Dr. Ray Rist, Director of the Center for Policy Studies, proposed that we undertake a systematic content analysis of the adult learner responses, making use of Ethnograph, a well-developed social science research software program to help us manage the data more easily. He put together and headed up a research team that included Dr. Gregg Jackson, who worked with the team in identifying and refining themes, Dr. David Wizer, who oversaw the technical aspects of using Ethnograph, and four coder/analysts: Sara

Categories for Coding Adult Perspectives

A. *Personal Development*

- daily life skills/tasks
- feel better about self
- future orientation
- religious practice
- understanding the world (external)
- protection/vulnerability
- able to communicate

B. *Family Parenting*

- set a good example for children
- help improve family circumstances
- help children with schooling
- read to children
- help children with moral and intellectual development

C. *Job/Complete in Global Economy*

- get a job/better job
- keep up with change/technology
- keep jobs in America
- language and cultural skills
- economic awareness
- job related literacy tasks

D. *Roles and Responsibilities of Citizenship*

- be an informed citizen
- participate in political process
- understand and strive for rights
- understand and fulfill responsibilities
- gain citizenship
- contribute to community

[2] See attached list of participating programs.

Goodwin, Carol Inge, Kirti Shastri, and Louise Wiener. Sondra Stein worked with the team on behalf of the Institute.

The team followed stringent qualitative procedures for analyzing and interpreting the data. Several days were spent reading and discussing a broad cross-section of the files in order to identify and reach consensus on themes that appeared robust enough to be used as categories for coding. At the end of this period we had refined four categories—each with five to six subcategories—that we felt were representative of the major themes raised by adults in their writing. Those of us on the team who had worked closely with adult learners felt especially comfortable using these categories to code the data because they were so familiar, the kind of comments we often hear from adult learners when they come to adult literacy programs. We tried to stay as close as possible to adults' own language in our wording of these subcategories. A full listing can be found in the Table above.

At this point, each coder was assigned two of the four categories, and over the next ten weeks coders worked their way through the 121 folders of responses, coding each submission and entering the codes into Ethnograph. During this period, team members met weekly to discuss issues, resolve problems, and reach agreement on how to handle data consistently.

The final two weeks were for synthesis: each coder was responsible for preparing working papers that summarized findings, sub-category by sub-category, for her two categories. Then the entire team read and discussed all eight papers to compare findings across categories and see what conclusions we could draw about what adults needed to know and be able to do to achieve Goal 6. These conclusions are developed in the report **Equipped for the Future: A Customer-Driven Vision for Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning.**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LITERACY

AN OPEN LETTER TO ADULT LEARNERS, THEIR TEACHERS, TUTORS AND PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Since 1990 we have had a National Goal for Adult Literacy and Life Long Learning in the United States. This goal reads:

> By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

This year the National Institute for Literacy and the National Education Goals Panel are trying to define this Goal more carefully so we can measure our national progress toward its achievement. ***We need your help*** to make sure that the definition we come up with matches adult learners' experience of their journey to literacy and full participation in our nation's economic and civic life.

We are seeking a minimum of 4 to 5 adult literacy and ESL programs in every state to help us find out how adults define Goal 5. We would like teachers and tutors in these programs to facilitate discussions with adult learners that will lead to writings by learners about what it means to "be literate," "compete in a global economy" and "exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." We hope to hear from hundreds of adult learners ***in their own words***, and to learn from them how adults in different parts of the country define what people need to know and do to achieve these goals in their own lives.

We have developed a set of Guidelines for the Project and two sample lessons that teachers and tutors may choose to use or adapt. We are very flexible about how participating programs encourage learner writings. However, we need to know by ***January 28, 1994*** if you are participating. And we need to receive the learner writings produced in your program by ***March 4, 1994***.

The deadline is important so that these ideas can feed into the Goals Panel process. The Institute will be analyzing all the writings we receive to include in a joint NIFL/NEGP report. We also will create a book of sample writings from across the country. In July we will return to states and programs copies of the writings we have received so you can create your own local or state books.

Please make sure the voices of learners in your state are heard. Read the enclosed Guidelines carefully. Call Sondra or Jaleh at the Institute (202–632–1500) to say you will participate. Ask for more copies of the Guidelines if you need them. Send us the perspectives of adult learners in their own words. Thank you.

800 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W., SUITE 200 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-7560
(202) 632-1500 • FAX (202) 632-1512

Adult Learner Perspectives on National Education Goal 5

GUIDELINES

The National Institute for Literacy
The National Education Goals Panel
1993

Introduction

In 1989 the President and the nation's Governors met in Virginia to develop a set of goals for education in the United States. The National Education Goals Panel was created to develop definitions for each goal and to help the President, the Congress, and the Governors figure out how to measure progress in achieving these goals. Goal 5 is the most directly connected to adult literacy. It reads:

> **Goal 5:** By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

The National Education Goals Panel has asked the National Institute for Literacy to join them in a national effort to define and begin to set standards for this goal. Therefore, we are asking some researchers, professionals, and policy makers for their thoughts about the goal. We also feel that it is important that adults learners participate in this project. We want the definitions and standards we develop to be consistent with the experiences of adults who are developing their literacy skills. Therefore, we need to understand what adult learners believe is most important to know and be able to do to compete in a global economy and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

One way to find out what adult learners think is to ask teachers and tutors all over the country to ask their students:

What is literacy?
What does it mean to be a citizen?
What are the rights and the responsibilities of citizens?
What does the global economy have to do with their lives?
What does it mean to be able to compete in the global economy?
What skills and knowledge do adults need to do these things?

We would like you to engage your students in discussion and writing activities about these topics so that students can respond to these questions in their own words.

You can approach this project in many ways, depending on where you live and work, and what critical issues related to Goal Five exist for adults in your community. For example, in a community with many new immigrants, citizenship, in the formal sense of what it means to be a citizen in a democracy and to live free from fear, may be an extremely vibrant topic. In another community, citizenship may be more connected to one's broader civic life — being a good parent, helping to keep the neighborhood safe from violence, being an active community leader, etc.

We encourage you to explore these issues freely with your students in a way that is most appropriate to your community and your teaching situation. We want the end product— the students' own words describing what these goals mean and what skills and knowledge they think it is important for adults to have. We will analyze the ideas in these student writings for our report for the Goals Panel. We will also publish a book of writing with students' views from all over the country.

This package has two teaching aids to help you with this project:

I. A short resource list related to Goal Five, including material on various aspects of citizenship, the global economy and work. These may help you find an approach that works for you.
II. Two sample lessons developed by Literacy South that you can use or adapt as appropriate for your situation. They may help you plan the process of discussion and writing with your students. The lessons follow these steps:

1) Pre-Reading Discussion
2) Reading Activity
3) Post-Reading Discussion
4) Writing and Sharing
5) Evaluation

We appreciate your involvement in this project. It offers an exciting opportunity for your students to have a voice in shaping national policy that directly effects their lives.

PREPARATION

Where Can I Find Information?

- Visit your local public library.
- Talk to community people about local politics, the local economy and issues facing the community in general.
- Check the newspapers for articles on these topics.
- Call or visit your local or state economic development office; they can provide you with demographics and information on plans for local economic development.
- Think about areas of interest and themes that are of particular significance and relevance to members in the class.
- Find a world map that reflects recent changes in eastern Europe, a United States map with major highway systems, and a local map with as much detail as possible.
- Use the resource list in this packet to identify materials that will stimulate your thinking.

Generating Writing

A group discussion is often a good way to introduce a writing topic. Students have the opportunity to talk about their ideas and to think about the topic with their peers. It is important that students feel relaxed and that their ideas are valued. In one-to-one programs you may want to encourage a group of students to come together for this project, or you may want to ask an ongoing student group, such as a support group or a student council to participate in the project. If you are doing this project as a tutor meeting with a single student, it is still important that you and your student engage in a discussion before writing, and it may be helpful if you write along with your student, so that you can share your ideas with each other.

Class Time Required

The sample lessons included in this packet need about two hours per lesson. They may require more than one class period or meeting time. Set realistic time goals and don't try to rush the process. Discussions take time, and it is important for students to have the time to talk about their concerns and the issues they care about. You also should plan to set aside time during the class for students to do the writing, rewriting and polishing of each piece.

Taping and Transcribing

We would appreciate a typed transcript of your discussions, if that is possible. This means that you use a tape recorder during the discussion, and then ask someone to type out exactly what is on the tape. Don't change the grammar or the words that people use. Transcribing is long, hard work. If you have never done this before, we encourage you to try to find someone who is experienced and who is willing to donate their time to transcribing your tape. The transcript should be double-spaced, and the pages should be numbered. The date and the names of the students should be at the top. A release form should accompany the transcript. Please send only ORIGINAL copies; NO PHOTOCOPIES PLEASE!

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please follow these submission guidelines:

1. Attach a completed release form to each piece of writing. If the writing piece is by a group, prepare a release form for the entire group, with everyone's signatures.

2. The material must truly represent the students' writing effort. We know that students in literacy programs have a wide range of writing abilities; we expect that some pieces may be only one or two sentences, while others may be a page or more in length. We are interested in students' thoughts, whatever their writing abilities are.

3. The students should make all corrections and revisions; instructor's input should be in consultation with the student. It is important that students feel that their writing, as sent to us, reflects their own thoughts and words. This means that while you may want to discuss possible changes or edits with the students, they have the final decision about changes.

4. Please send only ORIGINAL, TYPED COPY. No handwritten copies, faxes, or photocopies. We hope that we will receive writing from many students all over the country. We will make copies so that the writing can be shared and examined so we will not be able to work with writing that is difficult to read or photocopy.

5. Please send all student writings to the National Institute for Literacy no later than Friday, March 4, 1994.

SAMPLE LESSON 1

Title: *Competing in the Global Economy*

Teacher Preparation: Before you start, you may want to do some community research and background reading on citizenship, literacy, workforce preparedness, high performance organizations, and the economy. Since the "hi-tech" revolution of the 60's and 70's, there have been on-going discussions about workers' abilities to function in high performance organizations. Keep in mind the possibility of incorporating the unique concerns and issues around work, worker training, economic development, etc in your region of the country or your community. Some questions to consider in gathering information and doing research for this lesson include:

- What are the relationships between workers' skills and productivity?
- What needs to change in management and work as a result of innovations in technology?
- What responsibility do business and industry have in providing new skills and training for workers? What responsibility does government have? Communities?
- How do public officials, CEO's, unions, and workers in your community talk about the global economy?
- What does "global economy" mean to you?
- What are the economic development issues facing your community?

Goal: By the end of this lesson students will be able to understand how work has changed over time in their families and their communities and identify what they think of as the skills and knowledge necessary today to compete in a global economy.

Materials Needed: Markers, paper, pens or pencils, flipchart paper or chalkboard.

Time required: 2 hour class session

Steps

1. Pre-Activity Discussion:
   - What is work?
   - Outside of the home, where do people work in this community?
   - What is skilled work? unskilled work?
   - Has your work changed over the years? How?
   - Is your work changing now? How?

2. Class Activity: "How work has changed in my family and community"

On the chalkboard or flipchart, create a time line from 1900 to the year 2000. Have students list on their own sheets of paper the work of their grandparents, parents, their own work, their children's and grandchildren's work. Have students share their lists. Student responses should be noted on the timeline according to the general type of work done or job categories, i.e. farm, domestic, factory, etc. Now, as a class, look at and analyze the timeline. Questions to ask may include:

- What does the timeline say about work? about how work has changed over time?
- What does the timeline say about women's work?
- What are the various kinds of service jobs represented today?
- Why are there fewer farm related jobs today?

Record students' responses on flip chart or chalkboard.

3. Pre-Writing Discussion: Have students share their work histories. Ask students to think specifically about skills required to do certain work:

- What were the skills required to do farm work?
- How did people learn those skills? Who taught those skills?
- What are the skills required to do the work you do today?

SAMPLE LESSON 1

CONTINUED

Where did you get your training or the skills to do the work you are currently doing?
What does the global economy mean to you?
How does that apply to what's going on your community?
When people talk about workers having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy, what does that mean to you?

4. **Writing and Sharing:** Use one of the following stem sentences or create your own prompt for student writing about the skills and knowledge adults need today to compete in a global economy.

To me, having the skills and knowledge to compete in the global economy means . . .

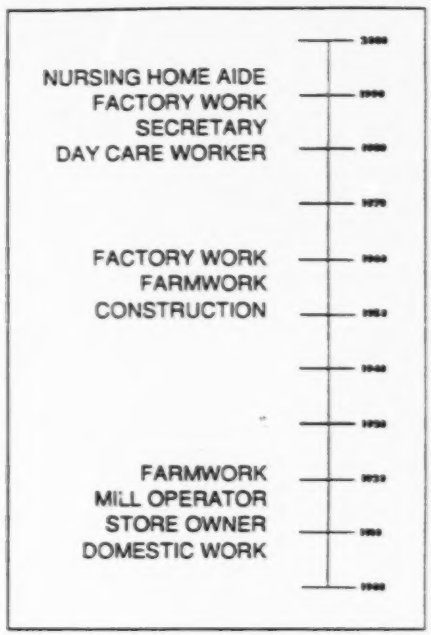
In my community, competing in the global economy means . . .

Ask students to read their pieces aloud, and give and get feedback.

5. **Evaluation:** It is important that students have an opportunity to express how they felt about the lesson and what was learned. Questions can include:

How did you feel about this lesson?
What more do you want to know about this topic?
What will you do differently as a result of participating in this lesson?

Sample Timeline



SAMPLE LESSON 2

Title: *Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship*

Teacher Preparation: This country has always been proud of its unique style of democracy. The quality of our democracy is based on the quality of participation by all citizens. Some people suggest a correlation between literacy levels and participation in the community. In preparing for this lesson there may be civic issues of particular concern to your community. You may want to incorporate those issues into this lesson. Some questions to consider for this lesson are:

- Do you think low literacy skills interfere with citizens' ability to understand and put to use the democratic principles on which this country is based?
- How do citizens with low literacy skills get information about issues concerning their lives?
- How can citizens, through the electoral process, influence the quality of life in their communities?
- How do people in your class think about voting?

Goal: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to identify specific activities related to exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens and the skills necessary to participate in such activities.

Materials needed: Magazine or newspaper article about citizenship

Time Required: One two-hour class session

Steps:

1. **Pre-Reading Discussion:** The pre-reading questions should get students thinking and talking about what they already know about citizenship and voting from their own experience and knowledge. There should also be some questions that ground students in their experiences relating to the subject of the news article or whatever subject you discuss. You may also want to include questions that reflect specific issues of concern to your community. Pre-reading questions can include but are not limited to questions such as:

   What does it mean to be a citizen?
   What does voting have to do with citizenship?
   What do you have to know and what skills do you need to be able to vote?
   Have you ever gone to a meeting about something in your community that you were concerned about? Something you wanted to change?
   What did you have to know and what skills did you need to be able to participate?
   How do you think your involvement reflects your rights and responsibilities as a citizen?

2. **Reading Activity:** Have members of the class read the magazine article (or substitute an article of importance or interest from your local newspaper).

3. **Post-Reading Discussion:** Post-reading questions should help students get in touch with their thoughts and feelings about the reading selection. Some possible questions are:

   What did you think of this article?
   Can you relate to the writer's experiences about voting?
   What kept the writer from voting so many years?
   What changed her mind?
   Is there a relationship between the "awesome responsibility of parenthood" and citizenship for you?
   Are there issues in your community that matter to you?
   What could you do to make a difference about the things that matter to you?
   Do you think voting will make a difference for you? How?

SAMPLE LESSON 2

CONTINUED

4. **Writing and Sharing:** Develop your own stem sentence or use one of the following stem sentences to get students to begin writing. Ask students to read their pieces aloud, and to give and get feedback:

To me, exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship means . . .

To exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship you have to be able to . . .

5. **Evaluation:** It is important that students have an opportunity to express how they felt about the lesson and what was learned. Questions can include:

How did you feel about this lesson?
What more do you want to know about this topic?
What will you do differently as a result of participating in this lesson?

SAMPLE ARTICLE

For Lesson 2

I'm 35 and I've never voted, but this year will be different

I'm thirty-five years old and I've never voted.

When I was old enough to vote, I never even took the time to register. My litany of excuses was not original, "Why bother? It's only one vote," I told myself. I rationalized that the government just preserves the status quo and one candidate is the same as another. The truth was, I was too lazy to learn about the issues and the candidates; my idea of reading the newspaper was to skim the Arts and Leisure section. As long as my day-to-day life wasn't affected, I was content to take democracy for granted.

Three years ago I gave birth to my first child. Faced with the awesome responsibility of parenthood, my youthful assumption that my family and I were immune to real danger faded. Some nights, I'd lie awake contemplating the horrific possibility of nuclear war. I no longer blindly believed that those in charge knew what they were doing. I realized I had to do whatever I could to protect my daughter. Voting for legislators who supported arms control was something within my power.

Concerned about Emily's future, I began to closely follow the news. As a result, I started to worry about a variety of things that seemed overwhelming in scope: Were we poisoning the world my child would inherit? How would our nation's drug problems someday affect her? Would she one day become a victim of job discrimination?

Of course, many of the things I newly wanted for Emily were things I had long wanted for myself, but hadn't worked up the energy to fight for. Now that I was more informed, I began eagerly sharing my views with other concerned people in the community and I was surprised to discover how many people agreed with me on various issues. I began to see how, in my small town, my single vote could have real impact when added to others. It wasn't hard to imagine our impact on a national scale next—and that was comforting.

When I registered for next month's Presidential election recently, I took Connecticut state's voter's oath, voting to "give my vote in a manner which contributes to the best interests of the nation." I take that responsibility seriously. Because of it, I feel more qualified to call myself an adult and a citizen. This election day, you'll find me at the polls, doing my part to improve things—not just for myself, but for Emily, and for all future generations.

by Jo-Ann Segalla, who lives with her husband and daughter in Connecticut

From *Glamour*, October, 1988, p. 152.

RESOURCES

The National Education Goals Report: Building a Nation of Learners. 1993. Includes an explanation of the goals and progress to date toward each goal, including Goal 5. Available from the National Education Goals Panel Communications; 1850 M Street NW, Suite 270; Washington, DC 20036.

America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages! 1990. Discusses the relationship between productivity and workforce skills; includes recommendations for education and employers. Available from the National Center on Education and the Economy; 39 State Street, Suite 500; Rochester, NY 14614. 716-546-7620.

Adult Literacy in America: A First Look at the Results of the National Adult Literacy Survey. Irwin S. Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, Lynn Jenkins, and Andrew Kolstad. 1993. National Center for Education Statistics. Study of the literacy proficiency of the U.S. adult population. Available through the U.S. Government Printing Office Order Desk at (202)783-3238. The GPO stock number for this book is 065-000-00588-3.

Adult Civic Education (ERIC Digest No. 129), 1992, by David L. Boggs. Two-page summary in which civic education is defined in the context of a democracy. There is a short bibliography.

Career Education for a Global Economy (ERIC Digest No. 135), 1993, by Sandra Kerka. A two-page summary examining the relationship between the global economy and workforce skills. Includes a bibliography.

Both Digests are available from ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education and Training for Employment; Ohio State University; 1900 Kenny Rd; Columbus, OH 43210.

National Issues Forums Issue Books. These short books include background information and discussion of policy issues in a number of areas relating to citizenship and the global economy and work. Abridged versions are developed specifically for literacy students. Request an order form by calling 1-800-338-5578.

Beyond the School Doors: The Literacy Needs of Job Seekers Served by the U.S. Department of Labor. Irwin S. Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, and Anne Campbell. 1992. U.S. Department of Labor. Report of study of literacy proficiencies of adults in Department of Labor training programs. Available through the U.S. Government Printing Office Order Desk at (202)783-3238.

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), US Department of Labor. Examines the skills needed in the workplace and identifies five SCANS competencies, together with minimum levels of proficiency. Also examines how education and training address these competencies. What Work Requires of Schools (1991) and other SCANS reports are available from US Department of Labor; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills; 200 Constitution Ave., NW; Washington, DC 20210.

These guidelines were prepared for the National Institute for Literacy by Literacy South, 331 W. Main St., Rm. 202, Durham, NC 27701, (919)682-8108.

Adult Learner Perspectives on National Education Goal 5 GUIDELINES.
The National Institute for Literacy and The National Education Goals Panel

The National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20202-7560
(202)632-1500

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RELEASE FORM

If you wish to submit writing or transcripts to this project, please fill out this form for each piece of writing submitted, or for each transcript. DEADLINE: March 4, 1994

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Program: _____ Teacher/Tutor: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

A few words about yourself and your writing:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I permit the National Institute for Literacy and the National Education Goals Panel to publish my writing.

_____ _____
signed date

Please send to:
The National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20202-7560
(202)632-1500

List of Participating Programs

- Alabama Council on Human Relations and Family Service Center
  P.O. Box 1632 • Auburn, Alabama 36831
- International Language School
  Cottage Hill Baptist Church • P.O. Box 9124 • Mobile, Alabama 36691
- Anchorage Literacy Project
  1345 Rudakof Circle, Suite 104 • Anchorage, Alaska 99508
- Frank Gordon Learning Center
  245 N. Centennial Way • Mesa, Arizona 85201
- Wesley Community Center
  1300 S. 10th Street • Phoenix, Arizona 85034
- Pima County Adult Education • Homeless Education Project
  130 W. Congress, Suite 530 • Tucson, Arizona 85701
- Pima County Adult Education • El Rio Learning Center
  1390 W. Speedway Boulevard • Tucson, Arizona 85745
- Pima County Adult Education • Eastside Learning Center
  1630 S. Alveron • Tucson, Arizona 85711
- Yuma Reading Council
  444 W. 2nd Street • Yuma, Arizona 85364
- Arkansas State University-Beebe • Newport-Adult Education Dept.
  7648 Victory Boulevard • Newport, Arkansas 72112
- California State Prison
  P.O. Box 8800 • Corcoran, California 93212
- Culver City Adult School
  4401 Elenda Street • Culver City, California 90230
- Alameda County Library Adult Literacy Program
  2450 Stevenson Boulevard • Fremont, California 94538
- Metropolitan Adult Education Program • Metropolitan Adult Center
  760 Hillsdale Avenue, Room 1 • San Jose, California 95136
- R.E.A.D. Project, Inc.
  618 4th Street, Suite #4 • Yreka, California 96097
- Denver Indian Center, Inc. • Adult Education Program
  4450 Morrison Road • Denver, Colorado 80219
- Greenlee Metro Lab School Family Resource Center
  1150 Lipan Street • Denver, Colorado 80216

- Spring Institute for International Studies
  1380 Lawrence Street, Suite 600 • Denver, Colorado 80204–2056
- The Adult Learning Source
  3607 Martin Luther King Boulevard • Denver, Colorado 80205
- Albert I. Prince Regional Vocational-Technical School
  The Taske I Program • 500 Brookfield Street • Hartford, Connecticut 06106
- Urban League of Greater Hartford
  1229 Albany Avenue • Hartford, Connecticut 06112–2187
- Adult Learning Center, • Meriden Public Schools
  169 Colony Street • Meriden, Connecticut 06450
- New Haven Adult Education Center
  580 Ella Grasso Boulevard • New Haven, Connecticut 06519
- Western Substance Abuse Treatment Unit
  P.O. Box 5549 • Newtown, Connecticut 06470–5549
- Norwich Adult Education
  Mahan Drive • Norwich, Connecticut 06360
- Manatee Area Vocational Technical Center
  5603 34th Street West • Bradenton, Florida 34210
- The School Board of Broward County, Florida
  Adult and Community Education Administration Center
  600 Southeast Third Avenue • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
- Indian River Community College • Adult Education Department
  3209 Virginia Avenue • Fort Pierce, Florida 34981–5599
- Florida Community College at Jacksonville
  South Campus • 11901 Beach Boulevard • Jacksonville, Florida 32216–6624
- Jefferson County Adult School
  706 E. Washington Street • Monticello, Florida 32344
- Pensacola Junior College • Adult Basic Education
  1000 College Boulevard • Pensacola, Florida 32504–8998
- Charlotte County School Board • Literacy Program
  2280 Aaron Street • Port Charlotte, Florida 33952
- Seminole Community College
  English for Speakers of Other Languages
  100 Weldon Boulevard • Sanford, Florida 32773–6199
- The School Board of Sarasota County, Florida
  Sarasota County Technical Institute
  Adult & Community Education Center
  1025 South Shade Avenue • Sarasota, Florida 34237

- Center for Community Education
  283 Trojan Trail • Tallahassee, Florida 32311

- Leon County Adult & Community Education
  3111–21 Mahan Drive • Drawer 106 • Tallahassee, Florida 32311

- Hillsborough Literacy Council, Inc.
  1505 North Nebraska Avenue • Ybor City Library • Tampa, Florida 33605

- Belleville Area College
  2500 Carlyle Road • Belleville, Illinois 62221–5899

- Kaskaskia College
  Reading Link • 27210 College Road • Centralia, Illinois 62801

- Westside Employment Center
  1019 S. May Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

- Morton College
  3801 S. Central Avenue • Cicero, Illinois 60650

- McHenry County College
  8900 U.S. Highway 14 • Crystal Lake, Illinois 60012–2761

- Danville Area Community College
  2000 Main Street • Martin Luther King Memorial Way
  Danville, Illinois 61832

- Richland Community College
  Project READ • 363 N. Water • Decatur, Illinois 62523

- CEFS Vandalia Adult Literacy Lab
  CEFS, 101 N. Fourth • Effingham, Illinois 62401

- Joliet Junior College
  1216 Houbolt Avenue • Joliet, Illinois 60436–9352

- The Family Learning Center
  The Literacy Connection • 611 N. Market Street
  Marion, Illinois 62959

- Project PAL
  322 N. Grant • Martinsville, Illinois 62442

- Lake Land College
  Project PAL
  5001 Lake Land Boulevard • Matoon, Illinois 61938–9366

- Black Hawk College
  6600 34th Avenue • Moline, Illinois 61265–5899

- MVCC Literacy Program
  10900 S. 88th Avenue • Palos Hill, Illinois 60465

- Tri-County (Peoria) Urban League
  317 South MacArthur Highway • Peoria, Illinois 61605
- Oakton Community College
  VITA • 7701 N. Lincoln Avenue • Skokie, Illinois 60077
- Porter Adult Education
  H170-Crown Point ALC • 113 S. Court • Crown Point, Indiana 46307
- Let's Help Education
  302 Van Buren • Topeka, Kansas 66603
- JOBS
  CCC Building • Dixie Street • London, Kentucky 40741
- Winchester/Clark County Literacy Council
  P.O. Box 4023 • Winchester, Kentucky 40391
- Project Learn
  1220 Aycock Street • Houma, Louisiana 70360
- Baltimore Reads, Inc.
  3 East Read Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202
- Learning is for Tomorrow (LIFT): A Community Approach to Literacy
  SECO • 10 S. Wolf Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21231
- St. Veronica's Damascus Education Center
  806 Cherry Hill Road • Baltimore, Maryland 21225
- Anne Arundel County Literacy Council
  7310 Ritchie Highway, Suite 603 • Glen Burnie, Maryland 21061
- The Literacy Center
  80 North Main Street • Attleboro, Massachusetts 02703
- English Transitional Program • English Transition Program
  (MA English Literacy Demonstration) • Asian American Civic Assoc.
  90 Tyler Street • Boston, Massachusetts 02111
- Quincy School Community Council AESL
  885 Washington Street • Boston, Massachusetts 02111
- Jamaica Plain Adult Learning Program
  144 McBride Street • Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts 02130
- UMASS Dartmouth Workplace Education Project
  UMASS Dartmouth Purchase Street Campus
  N. Dartmouth, Massachusetts 02747–2300
- Read/Write/Now
  200 Birnie Avenue • Springfield, Massachusetts 01107

- Glare/Gladwin Literacy
  300 Hillcrest • P.O. Box 414 • Clare, Michigan 48617
- Montcalm Adult Reading Council
  205 S. Franklin • Greenville, Michigan 48838
- Portland Area Literacy Services
  The Readers' Club • 1100 Ionia Road • Portland, Michigan 48875
- Star Adult Education Center
  595 Division Street • Biloxi, Mississippi 38530
- Quick Start Club
  Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College • P.O. Box 100
  Gautier, Mississippi 39553
- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
  Jefferson Davis Campus • 2226 Switzer Road • Gulfport, Mississippi 39507
- LEAP (Learn, Earn and Prosper)
  125 Walnut Street • Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401
- Jackson Program for Adult Readers
  622 Duling Avenue • Jackson, Mississippi 39216
- Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
  Perkinston Campus • P.O. Box 47 • Perkinston, Mississippi 39573
- Adult Basic Education Learning Center
  1000 S. 9th Street • St. Joseph, Missouri 64503
- LVA Butte Literacy Program, Inc.
  P.O. Box 244 • Butte, Montana 59703
- Helena Adult Learning Center
  815 Front Street • Helena, Montana 59601
- Literacy Volunteers of America
  35 4th Street West • Kalispell, Montana 59901
- Lincoln Literacy Council
  315 S. 9th, Suite #11 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68508
- Omaha Public School Adult Education
  3215 Cuming Street • Omaha, Nebraska 68131–2024
- Valmont 2000: Work Place Literacy for Lifelong Learning
  Valmont Industries • P.O. Box 358 • Valley, Nebraska 68064
- Adult Basic Education
  22 Atkinson Street • Dover, New Hamshire 03820–3768
- Rockingham County Adult Tutorial Program
  40 Linden Street • Hampton, New Hampshire 03833

- Nashua Adult Learning Center
  4 Lake Street • Nashua, New Hampshire 03060

- Rochester City School District
  Toyota Family Literacy Program • 131 W. Broad Street
  Rochester, New York 14614

- The Learning Place
  250 Lincoln Avenue • Syracuse, New York 13244–1170

- Randolph Community College • Learning Skills Center
  P.O. Box 1009 • Asheboro, North Carolina 27204–1009

- Caldwell Community College
  Watauga Campus • 456 Tracy Circle • Boone, North Carolina 28607

- Durham County Literacy Council
  P.O. Box 8651 • Durham, North Carolina 27707

- Durham Technical Community College
  1637 Lawson Street • Durham, North Carolina 27703

- Fayetteville Technical Community College
  P.O. Box 35236 • Fayetteville, North Carolina 28303–0236

- Literacy
  Rt 2 Box 47 • Highland, North Carolina 28741

- Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute
  Basic Skills Program • 1000 Hickory Boulevard • Hudson, North Carolina 28638

- Bethel Colony of Mercy
  P.O. Box 732 • Lenoir, North Carolina 28645

- Voices
  A Creative Community • P.O. Box 2444 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27602

- Case Western Reserve Learning Center
  1380 Sixth Street • Cleveland, Ohio 44114

- Office of Adult and Continuing Education
  1440 Lakeside Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44114

- May Dugan Center
  4115 Bridge Avenue • Cleveland, Ohio 44113

- North Hampton Community College
  3835 Green Pond Road • Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 18017

- Delaware County Literacy Council
  225 E. 24th Street • Chester, Pennsylvania 19013

- Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program
  1340 Frankford Avenue • Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19125

- Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
  100 Sheridan Square, 4th Floor • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15206

- Department of Education
  Academy for Adults • Calle Santa Cruz #72
  Urbanizacion Santa Cruz • Bayamon, Puerto Rico 00959

- Department of Education
  Educational Service Center • Calle Padial Esq Betances
  Primer Piso de la Biblioteca • Caguas, Puerto Rico 00725

- Educational Academy for Adults
  Bo. Algarrobos • Guayama, Puerto Rico 00785

- Department of Education
  Conversational English at a Government Agency
  P.O. Box 759 • Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00919

- Educational Service Center of San Juan
  Avenue Ponce De Leon 1429 • Parada 21 • Santurce, Puerto Rico 00908

- Dorcas Place Parent Literacy Center, Inc.
  270 Elmwood Avenue • Providence, Rhode Island 02907

- Literacy Volunteers of America
  P.O. Box 356 • Westerly Library • Westerly, Rhode Island 02891

- Sullivan County • Department of Education
  P.O. Box 306 • Blountville, Tennessee 37617

- Sequatchie County JOBS Program
  P.O. Box 488 • Dunlap, Tennessee 37327

- Unicoi County Roundtable Discussion Group
  600 N. Elm Avenue • Erwin, Tennessee 37650

- Center for Adult Reading & Enrichment
  110 Irby Street • Jackson, Tennessee 38301

- Overton County Adult Education
  112 Bussell Street • Livingston, Tennessee 38570

- ABE Level I (Literacy)
  1500 Jett Road • Maryville, Tennessee 37804

- Family Education Laboratory
  502 East LeMarr Alexander • Maryville, Tennessee 37804–5907

- Memphis Literacy Council
  703 S. Green • Building C • Memphis, Tennessee 38111

- Time to Read
  5201 Cole Road • Memphis, Tennessee 38117

- Glencliff High School
  190 Antioch Pike • Nashville, Tennessee 37211
- LVA/Municipal Library
  Wilbanks Avenue • Baytown, Texas 77520
- El Paso Community College
  Literacy Education Action • 1115 N. Oregon Street • El Paso, Texas 79902
- Texas A&M University
  Texas Center for Adult Literacy & Learning • College Station, Texas 77843
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
  1401 State School Road • Riverside Unit 1B • Gatesville, Texas 76599–2999
- The Literacy Center of Harlingen
  801 N. 13th Street • Sun Valley Mall, Suite 17 • Harlingen, Texas 78550
- Kleberg County Literacy Project • Texas A&M University
  Kingville Campus • Box 147 • Kingville, Texas 78363
- Odessa College Adult Basic Education
  201 W. University • Odessa, Texas 79764
- Windham School District • Special Education
  717 S. Sycamore Street • Palestine, Texas 75801
- Windham School System
  Jester III Unit • Richmond, Texas 77469
- Project Learn-Even Start
  Travis Elementary School • 3711 Avenue I • Rosenburg, Texas 77471
- John Jay High School
  6711 Marbach • San Antonio, Texas 78227
- Northside Independent School District • Adult Basic Education
  6632 Bandera Road • San Antonio, Texas 78238
- San Marcos Literacy Action
  P.O. Box 907 • 310 W. Hutchinson • San Marcos, Texas 78667
- Workforce Instructional Network
  P.O. Box 1246 • San Marcos, Texas 78667
- Education Service Center Region IX
  301 Loop 11 • Wichita Falls, Texas 76305–3799
- Harrell Learning Center
  Region 9 ESC • 301 Loop 11 • Wichita Falls, Texas 76305
- Literacy Action Center
  180 N. 300 W., Room 11 • Salt Lake City, Utah 84103

- BEACON
  9535 Linton Hall Road • Briston, Virginia 22013

- Bellingham Technical College
  Learning Center • 3028 Lindbergh Avenue • Bellingham, Washington 98225

- Big Bend Community College
  7662 Chanute Street • Moses Lake, Washington 98837–3299

- South Puget Sound Community College
  2011 Mottman Road, SW • Olympia, Washington 98502

- Literacy Action Center
  8016 Greenwood Avenue • North Seattle, Washington 98103

- Goodwill Learning Center
  1400 Dearborn Street • Seattle, Washington 98144

- St. James Refugee Program/Literacy Action Center
  804 9th Avenue • Seattle, Washington 98104

- Mercer County Literacy Volunteers of America
  P.O. Box 442 • Bluefield, West Virginia 24701

- Upshur County Adult Learning Center
  Rt. 6 Box 529 • Buckhannon, West Virginia 26201

- Garnet Pre-GED
  422 Dickinson Street • Charleston, West Virginia 25301

- Clendenin Community Center
  ABE/JOBS Program • Clendenin, West Virginia 25045

- ABE/GED Regional Jail
  RESA VIII • 1406 Charles Town Road • Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

- Wood Co. Adult Learning Center
  1200 Mary Street • Parkersburg, West Virginia 26101

- Hampshire County Adult Learning Center
  HC 74, Box 87HS • Romney, West Virginia 26757

- The Literacy Program of the Weirton Area
  Laubach Literacy Council • Mary Weir Public Library
  3442 Main Street • Weirton, West Virginia 26062

- LVA-Chippewa Valley
  L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library
  400 Eau Claire Street • Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701

- Indian Head Literacy Coalition
  1019 S. Knowles Avenue • New Richmond, Wisconsin 54017

Adult Learner Perspectives on Goal 6 Comment Form

This project began by reaching out to adult learners to ask their help in determining what the goals of adult literacy and basic skills education should be. They have responded by sharing with us the purposes for which they need literacy. In the attached paper, we have proposed adopting these purposes as a guiding vision for adult literacy practice. We invite your response to this proposal. Please complete the questions below and return by mail to NIFL or fax to 202–632–1512. **Attach additional sheets, if necessary.**

1. This is feedback from (check only one response):

- ❑ An Adult Learner
- ❑ A Program Administrator
- ❑ A Program Teacher/Tutor
- ❑ A Policy maker
- ❑ A Trainer or Provider of Technical Assistance
- ❑ A Group: Name of Group _____ Number of People _____

What is your program affiliation? (example: Workplace, ESL, ABE):

_____

What state and city is your program in?

_____

2. The purposes described in the adult learners' writings and the analysis of those writings (vision paper prepared by NIFL) are consistent with my (our) experience. (Please check one)

❑ Agree Strongly ❑ Agree ❑ Cannot Judge ❑ Disagree ❑ Disagree Strongly

Comments:

3. What use will you make of this information about the primary purposes for literacy?

4. If you were trying to address all four of these purposes in your classroom or program, what would change in how you teach and assess adults? in how you evaluate learner and/or program success?

a. what new or additional resources would you need?

b. what barriers would need to be removed for you to be successful?

5. In your opinion, what are the three most important changes that need to be made in adult education in order for all adults to have the optimal opportunity to meet these four purposes?

6. Other comments you would like to share:

7. I would like to be involved in further activities to implement this vision.
I am particularly interested in:

- ❑ receiving more information from the Institute
- ❑ helping to start a practitioner's group in my area
- ❑ participating in a national working group on _____
- ❑ applying for pilot funds
- ❑ other _____

My name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

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National Institute for Literacy
800 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20202–7560

National Institute for Literacy

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) is an independent federal agency charged with enhancing the national effort to reach the sixth National Education Goal—that all adult Americans will be literate by the year 2000. Created under the National Literacy Act of 1991, NIFL has a broad and ambitious mission to:

- Provide national leadership in the development of policies and programs that support the creation of a highly effective and efficient literacy system;
- Create an agenda for research, development and evaluation in the area of adult and family basic skills education;
- Improve the overall quality of literacy services in the nation to maximize progress towards 100% literacy in America;
- Implement an effective communication system that can reach the state, local, and national levels with timely policy and program information.

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